THE

LADIES FRIEND,

From the FRENCH of

Monſieur de GRAVINES.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXVI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

LADY CHATHAM,

As a PATTERN for IMITATION,

And, in her own CONDUCT and EXAMPLE,

THE LADIES BEST FRIEND,

THIS

LITTLE TREATISE

On the VIRTUES and QUALIFICATIONS which are the trueſt Ornaments of the SEX,

Is moſt humbly [illegible]ated, by

HER LADYSHIP's

Very reſpectful,

And devoted,

Humble Servant,

The Tranſlator.

PREFACE,

By the AUTHOUR.

THE reader has here neither a parody nor an imitation of THE FRIEND OF MAN; the particular caſt of that work will ſcarce admit of a happy imitation. But I owe to it the thought of laying ſome friendly counſels before the LADIES, and of canvaſſing

vaſſing with them their neareſt concerns. It was proper to uſe a leſs elevated ſtyle, and to accommodate myſelf to our fair philoſophers; and this I have attended to. I promiſe myſelf, that far from being offended at this admonitory ſcheme of amendment, they will be better pleaſed with the decent freedom I have uſed, than if I had addreſſed them in a ſtring of well-turned compliments.

For

For the reſt it may not be amiſs to inform the Ladies, that their Friend is not one bit handſomer than Alain Chartier *, and though extremely deſirous of the approbation of a Margaret of Scotland, is very far from expecting the like marks of it.

* Alain Chartier, or Charretier, was ſecretary to Charles VII. king of France, and famous for ſeveral works both in proſe and verſe. Margaret, daughter to the then king of Scotland, and wife to the dauphin, afterwards Louis XI. paſſing through a hall where Alain, who had very few graces in his perſon, lay aſleep on a bench, ſhe kiſſed him before all her attendants, in return for the many excellent things which had proceeded from him. Mr. Fontenelle, among his *Dialogues of the Dead*, has a very agreeable one on this incident.

THE LADIES FRIEND.

IN all ages women have been too much extolled, and too much decried. In the eye of him who is ſenſible of the charms of beauty, they are the ſovereigns of the univerſe, nature's maſter-piece; whilſt the moroſe and gloomy man looks on them as ſo many Pandoras*, imputing

* A beautiful woman, to whom the gods had given every gift; but Jupiter ſent her down on earth with a box, containing all kinds of evils: ſhe opened it, and out they all flew, Hope alone excepted, which remained at the bottom.

imputing to them all the evils with which the world has been ever afflicted. Thus, blinded by rancour and love, men have equally exceeded in panegyric and ſatyr. Every one ſpeaks of the ſex according to the diſpoſition of his own mind; of courſe the moſt vicious will be the readieſt to paint them in the moſt unpleaſing colours.

Amidſt all this contrariety in men's judgements concerning women, they ſtill ſpring from one and the ſame principle, the lively intereſt they take in them. Every thing in that beautiful half of the human ſpecies naturally affects us; attitude, carriage, every little motion, the very accent and tone of their voice attach us. Accordingly, to form a juſt judgement

ment of them does not require an indifference towards them. Perſons of ſuch a diſpoſition, if there are any ſuch, would be in a ſtate very much to be pitied; and on the other hand, violent paſſions equally miſlead the mind, ſo that they who view women either through the maſk of tumultuous love, or the dark vapours of jealouſy, muſt neceſſarily be egregiouſly miſtaken in their ideas of them.

Thus it is neither the enthuſiaſtic lover, nor the diſcontented huſband, who are to be conſulted on this important article; both being equally exceptionable, recourſe muſt be had to more competent judges. There are many men whoſe behaviour, from a natural gentleneſs and feſtivity, is

a pleaſing compound of decency and ſprightlineſs, when in company with women whom they value: theſe are the men to be liſtened to, and all theſe allow the ſex to be poſſeſſed of many happy qualities, which, with very little culture, will bring forth exquiſite fruits.

It is manifeſt that females are by nature qualified to appear in the world with advantage, much ſooner than men. A young lady of fifteen, both thinks and expreſſes herſelf with propriety and elegance, ſo as to be the delight of a company, where a youth of the ſame age would be entirely out of his element. As forward trees, in which, being of a ſoft and looſe texture, the ſap meets with little obſtruction in its circulation,

and

and thus they are covered with verdure and bloſſoms long before others, of a coarſer and more compact ſubſtance, feel the genial approaches of ſpring; ſo women, formed for a more ſpeedy diſplay of their abilities, ſtand in much leſs need than men, of any of the adventitious ſuccours of art, to attain the degree of perfection of which they are capable.

And this degree is not to be eſtimated as much inferior to ours; many of them rival us in the endowments of the mind, and in the qualities of the heart they generally ſurpaſs us. That they have faults, muſt be allowed; like ourſelves, they bear the ſtamp of human nature; but a multitude of virtues may well plead indulgence for thoſe

little foibles; foibles, of which a conſiderable part are owing to the men; the deſire of pleaſing, which is natural to the ſex, inducing them to form their manners and behaviour agreeably to the notions current among us.

It is the misfortune of women, as well as of the great, to be, from their childhood, ſurrounded by crowds of flatterers, who make it their buſineſs to conceal the truth from them. Beauty has this inconveniency; it draws after it the idle and ſuperficial, who, ever watchful to cheriſh in women a childiſh vanity, as conducive to ſome ends of their own, leave no ſtone unturned in diverting their minds from all ſerious thoughts.

In

In the midſt of a court compoſed of ſuch men, whoſe leaſt foible is frivolouſneſs, can it be ſurpriſing that women ſhould arrive to be ſo? is it not rather matter of wonder, that there ſtill remains ſo great a number of women deſerving of eſteem, perſons of real worth, when every thing conſpires to ſtifle the happy diſpoſitions which nature has implanted in them?

The beſt way, therefore, of reforming women, would be to amend the men. A reſpectable patriot, ardently zealous for the honour and welfare of his country, has lately endeavoured to rectify the ideas of his countrymen, and even to extinguiſh in them ſo much as the principle of evil. The friend of man muſt be

the friend of women; the real intereſts of each ſex, rightly underſtood, being intimately connected with thoſe of the other. Wiſhing his wiſe counſels the moſt extenſive effects, I preſume, in imitation of this reſpectable perſonage, to offer to my countrywomen ſome obſervations on what they owe to themſelves, and to ſociety. We are daily deluged with books to corrupt them; and does not this growing evil call for ſome antidote?

DIVI-

DIVISION.

I Shall examine what kind of ſtudy and employment is moſt ſuitable to women, relatively to their ſtation in ſociety. After treating of pleaſures, among which luxury and dreſs are to be ranked, I ſhall proceed to ſome reflections on love, marriage, and the education of children, concluding with a liſt of female virtues, which are not ſo rare, and thinly ſown, as ſome folks, of gloomy tempers, would make us believe.

My intention is, briefly to lay before the ſex certain truths, which cuſtom would fain explode by pre-

ſcription. If ſometimes they have contributed to multiply our exceſſes, they have often been the means of reſcuing us. Women can do whatever they dare undertake. Thoſe who are ſo nobly principled as to make uſe of that ſuperiority over us, chaſtiſe our pride by doing us ineſtimable good; and this conduct only, with all who deſerve the appellation of men, imparts an additional power to their charms.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

State of Women in Society.

THEY who hold women to be only beautiful figures, placed here by way of ornament, have but a very imperfect idea of them; they are continually complimented with being the delightful flowers, formed to heighten the colouring of the univerſe. Who queſtions it? but, withal, let not the ladies ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed on by theſe poetical flouriſhes; let not their thoughts be taken up with ſuch ſuperficial advantages: too many already content themſelves with this ſlender

ſlender portion, and ſeem utterly to have thrown aſide all other views and attention, excepting merely charming the eye.

Women are appointed for very different purpoſes; they were created for a much nobler end, than to be an empty ſhow; their charms are indications of more intereſting qualities. The confining the ſex to external attractions, is degrading them; it is almoſt reducing them to a level with their portraits. Women who are only beautiful, may make a delightful figure in a chair of ſtate, and embelliſh an aſſembly-room. They are a fine ſight, in the literal ſenſe of the words. But, for a woman's converſation to be what ſociety has a right

right to expect from it, much more is required than mere beauty.

Intercourse between intelligent beings cannot be thought to imply no more than a bare personal appearance, or an insipid exchange of vanity and lying. That company which does not tend to make us better, bids fair to make us worse.

If women, who are the ornament of society, add to their personal graces the talents of the mind and a rectitude of heart, our natural desire of recommending ourselves to them will of course put us on copying their example. If they raise their minds to an habitual converse with great objects, every virtue will be seen to spring forth in the men.

The power with which their beauty inveſts them, was given for the good of the whole human ſpecies. Man, as deſtined for deeds of ſtrength and courage, has a roughneſs in his temper, which women alone can ſoften: there is in their ways, ſtill more than in their features, a ſweetneſs capable of mollifying that natural impetuoſity, which, without ſuch a connection, would quickly degenerate into ferocity.

It may be affirmed, that were we to live a-part from women, we ſhould be quite a different ſort of creatures from what we are; our attention to inſinuate ourſelves into their good graces, poliſhes and ſweetens that abruptneſs and aſperity ſo natural

to

to men. Their lively diſpoſition is a counterpoiſe to our gravity and auſterity; in a word, man, without an intercourſe with women, would be both leſs perfect *, and leſs happy.

He who has no reliſh for the charms of their converſation, is very rarely diſtinguiſhed for philanthropy; that deep-rooted aſperity, which dwells in him, makes his very virtues dangerous. The great qualities of Charles XII. would never have raiſed ſuch commotions, had that prince been a little more converſant

* The mortified retreat of ſome perſons, totally alienated from the world, is not meant here: they have certainly a peculiar calling, which makes them an exception, and imparts thoſe valuable qualities which are acquired in the company of women.

verſant with women *, as by them only his ferocious valour could be humaniſed.

As men can ſcarce be thoroughly civiliſed, but by the gentle endearments of women, ſo theſe ſtand in need of an intercourſe with men, to awaken their vivacity, and prevent their giving themſelves up to indolence and ſupineneſs; which would certainly be their caſe, if not ſtimulated by a ſtrong deſire of pleaſing. It is this deſire which produces the graces of their looks, the elegance of their gait, and the ſweetneſs of their voice; whether they talk, move, or ſmile, to pleaſe is their great

* He refuſed to ſee the counteſs of Konigſmarc, who came to him from king Auguſtus, with overtures of peace, to which her beauty and underſtanding would have given weight.

great intent; ſo that women may be ſaid in no ſmall meaſure to owe their leading allurements to men, as without them they would become fretful and indolent. Further, a woman's mind, overwhelmed with ſmall-talk, would ſtagnate in a diſgraceful ignorance, but that it derives refinement and elevation from the ſolid and ſublime ſubjects which the converſation of men brings them acquainted with.

Thus both ſexes are reciprocal inſtruments of each others improvement. The rough ſpirit of the one is tempered by the gentleneſs of the other, which has likewiſe its obligations to that ſpirit. Mens ſentiments contract a milder turn in the company of women, who, on the other

other hand, find their volatility abated in that of the men: their different qualities intermingling, form a happy ſymphony to the great improvement of each other.

This difference in temper may be compared to that of voices; it is to form an agreeable concert, and not a grating diſſonance. If men are of a hardier mould, and a more reſolute caſt, it is that they may more effectually concur to promote the well-being of women, whoſe complexion is leſs vigorous; but one ſex has no claim in nature to oppreſs the other. From their intimate conjunction, their real advantages muſt be common and inſeparable; and as for thoſe ridiculous wranglings about ſuperiority, they may be reckoned

inſults

inſults to nature, and betray a want of a due ſenſe of its wiſe and gracious diſpenſations.

We are born friends to women, not their rivals; and ſtill leſs their tyrants. To make ſlaves of them is an unnatural abuſe of that ſtrength which was given us to protect them; it is depriving ſociety of its ſweeteſt ſolace; it cannot but be inſipid, if that part of our ſpecies, the fitteſt and beſt qualified to animate it, be excluded.

Of this the Orientals are an inſtance, whoſe brutal paſſion being accompanied with a conſciouſneſs of their weakneſs, they have accounted women dangerous companions, and to be guarded againſt. Accordingly they have loaded them with chains

to ſecure their own freedom. They fancy that an immoderate paſſion for women, gave them a right to trample them beneath their feet.

Theſe imperious lords have been the firſt victims to their own tyrannical jealouſy. Given up to a languid life, and, as it were, alone in the midſt of their beautiful ſlaves *, the ſentimental part of love has never touched their hearts: this, and the delicate pleaſure interwoven with

* All the calculations of inhabitants, both in France and England, ſufficiently demonſtrate both the fallacy and injuſtice of the ſyſtem of a plurality of wives; and as to quiet, little of that can be expected among a number of women, all rivals to each other. A ſeraglio being a priſon, the quarrels and animoſities there do not tranſpire, as among us, though within they rage with inceſſant vehemence.

with it, are only to be found where liberty is the leading principle. No wonder then, that both ſhun a connection void of all thoſe circumſtances which are productive of them. Theſe nations were for making themſelves amends by a groſs voluptuouſneſs; but this has only benumbed their ſenſes, and beſtialized their ſouls.

Our nation, ſo far from being chargeable with any ſuch barbarity, has rather run into the oppoſite extreme: it has ever paid to women, homages which, perhaps, exceeded reaſon and prudence. The ancient Gauls, amidſt other marks of eſteem and reverence, had a council of women, wherein the moſt weighty affairs

fairs were finally determined *. Next came the Roman gallantry, and this was ſucceeded by another kind of romantic gallantry, which conſtituted women judges of the merit and valour of the men. Since that period our anceſtors adopted the ancient chivalry, of Mooriſh origin, and for a conſiderable time all our nobility wore their ladies liveries, and rejoiced in expoſing themſelves to all kinds of dangers, merely for a look. To gain a ribbon, at a tournament, the man of ſpirit braved the

* The Berceau de la France gives us an ingenious deſcription of the exceſſive homages this country ever paid to the female ſex, as well as a very entertaining account of the adorations which the honeſt Gauls are ſuppoſed to have paid to thoſe deities, under the name of Meonides. However the appellation may be changed, it is evident the worſhip ſtill continues.

the greateſt dangers *, and the approbation of a fair one who beſtowed the prize, was held a ſufficient reward for the boldeſt achievements, and incited them to farther enterprizes.

The good graces of the ſex are now-a-days obtained at a much cheaper rate; valour and magnanimity are no longer neceſſary to gain the ladies favour; minute obſervances, acts of trivial complaiſance, and a ſervile imitation, are ſufficient for that felicity. The ladies (and the fault is ours) being thrown into a con-

* It is to this day an act of gallantry, in Spain, to fight with an enraged bull. The ladies exult to ſee the daring courage of their lovers at theſe entertainments, and beſtow prizes to the victors, as partaking of their glory.

a continual diſſipation, for which they are not made, have contracted an inclination for what is frivolous, and even brought it into vogue. They have ſo far ſubjected the men to their caprices, that all diſtinction of the ſuperiority of reaſon is loſt; ſoftneſs having, if the expreſſion may be allowed, effeminated every thing. The contraſt, put by nature between the two ſexes, is no longer to be ſeen; and one has found out in the other, a weakneſs capable even of augmenting that which is innate in itſelf.

Women are become a kind of animated idols, whoſe worſhippers have copied all their attitudes and geſtures. Incenſe has been profuſely offered to them, and in return

for it they have forfeited their virtue: their eyes have been made heaven, and life and death have been put into their hands. Our dramatic entertainments ſeem particularly intended to perpetuate the myſteries of that ridiculous idolatry *, and we go on in a licentious worſhip of the fair ſex, which leads them into depravation: contagious vice ſpreads through the whole ſociety. By our neglect to rectify the hearts of thoſe whom we are deſirous of pleaſing, this deſire is become highly pernicious to us, and the allurements of the women make a great part of the wretchedneſs of mankind.

* This is chiefly applicable to the operas, which are a kind of Love-liturgy, full of hymns, and breathing a very fervent ſpirit of devotion to that deity.

Women ſhould deſpiſe ſuch perfidious adorations; they are a diſgrace both to their ſex and ours: they ſhould diſdain being the public objects of a worſhip which diſhonours them. They are, indeed, made to be loved, as the ornaments and ſupreme delights of rational ſociety; but, being called to a quiet life, they are not to be left to that crowd of idlers which daily flock round them. Their graces, by being made leſs public, will form the ſtronger impreſſions. I ſhould be very ſorry to live among a people who, like our ſouthern neighbours, ſeclude women from company; yet I hold it becoming in women to live a little in the ſhade, and to go into company no oftener than will give a more

more agreeable reliſh to the pleaſure of finding themſelves again by their own fire-ſides.

It is the crowd of perpetual company which is to be feared; and let me earneſtly adviſe women to ſhun it, if they would preſerve themſelves from the impreſſions of a contagious air. But it is greatly for their own and our advantage, that they do not ſequeſter themſelves from a ſelect and well-behaved company: there, inſtead of interchanging vices, pleaſure and virtue form an improving alliance; the mind of man imbibes politeneſs without effeminacy; and women, refining our delights, will inſtil into us that gentleneſs, by means of which they obtain whatever they pleaſe.

They are the very ſoul of company, they give it whatever ſhape they pleaſe. The court itſelf has undergone many variations, and all of them depended on the diſpoſitions of thoſe ladies who held the firſt rank. That of Lewis XIV. ſo celebrated for decorum and elegance, owed no ſmall part of its luſtre to the great number of its female ornaments; and in the times of Henrietta, of England, and the ducheſs of Burgundy, it ſhone with an unparalelled blaze of politeneſs.

Women not only enliven ſociety, but may really alſo be accounted the great ſpring which ſets it in motion. The adminiſtration of affairs, and the different branches of government, are indeed in mens hands; but

but this very diſtribution is but a more direct ſecurity and diſplay of woman's aſcendancy. Mankind being led more by the heart than by the mind, in whatever hands the power be, it is always at the diſpoſal of the beloved object. Whether this be a weakneſs I know not; but if it be, it is founded in nature. Where women rule, men reign; and where thoſe are inveſted with the parade of ſovereignty, they are, for the moſt part, no more than a kind of ſecond cauſes, receiving their firſt impulſe from women *.

This female rule is no ſort of evil, if women can form their ideas and

* It may poſſibly be for this reaſon, that in Nubia the ſceptre is always in female hands. If ſo, let us no longer call thoſe people Barbarians.

ſentiments to the part they act among us. Let them converſe with what is great; let them labour to enlarge the ſphere of their thoughts, and they will be able occaſionally to ſupply us with uſeful counſels, being endued with a penetration which often obſerves what has eſcaped us; and numberleſs inſtances ſhow them capable of an intrepidity and firmneſs, which would do honour to a hero. The Engliſh were never ſo powerful as under their queen Eliſabeth; and we now ſee two large empires in Europe governed by women, who may be claſſed with the greateſt kings. In them, united with all the beauty of their ſex, we behold the eminent qualities of Charles V. and Peter the Great *.

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* The Empreſs-queen, and the Czarina.

The misfortune is, that women do not ſufficiently conſider their own worth. They triſle away their whole life about a beauty to which they can make no addition, wholely neglecting all culture of the mind, as a rich ſoil lying fallow. Their laſt ſigh, ſays St. Evremond, is more for the loſs of their beauty than of life. Be it, therefore, known to them, that beauty no farther deſerves praiſe and homage, than as the tenement of a beautiful ſoul. Nature uſually beſtows charms only on what is of a ſalutary quality; it is ſeldom that a very ſightly fruit is poiſonous; a vicious beautiful woman, therefore, is a very monſter in nature.

CHAP. II.

What Studies are proper for the Sex.

TO debar women from literature of any kind, is uſing them like Mahomet, who, to make them more voluptuous, has thought fit to deny them a ſoul. The greater part, indeed, behave as if they themſelves had adopted that notion, though ſo defamatory to their ſex, and ſeem to place a value on that lively and brilliant genius to which they owe their aſcendency, as much, and even more, than to their ſelf-idolized beauty.

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There is no reflecting on the happy diſpoſitions of women, and the attainments of ſome, without being concerned at their making ſo little account of their talents; for a ſmall degree of pains would ſuffice to cultivate them. Women, as Montagne ſays, are arch triflers, and their perception is ſo delicate, that they readily, and without any labour, diſcern the relations between objects. It is pity that a blameable indifference ſhould ſtifle their moſt valuable endowments.

Their beauty, however powerfully it attracts us to them, is not able to retain us. The cuſtom of ſeeing a fine face, ſoon weakens its firſt impreſſion. When we come to be at a loſs what to ſay to a beautiful wo-

man, the liking we had conceived for her is gradually ſuperſeded by diſguſt; and this diſguſt, which is occaſioned by a barrenneſs of ideas in women, is the beginning of that inconſtancy which they ſo often lay to our charge.

Women may judge of the difference between themſelves, from that which they themſelves make between an empty coxcomb, who fatigues them, and a man of a cultivated underſtanding, who entertains them. Very little pains will ſet them above the latter, and throw the advantage into their hands; and this is a kind of conqueſt over us, which we ourſelves deſire they would obtain: it would give us pleaſure, inſtead of any jealouſy, to ſee them

partakers

partakers of a good, which is always worth more than its coſt.

The more they enlarge their ideas, the more objects of intercourſe will there be between them and us, and conſequently the more animated and intereſting will ſuch intercourſe be. Numberleſs are the things which ſuffer from their not being capable of them, and in which we ſee freſh beauties, when in the company of women qualified for ſuch topics.

But what are the objects to which women may properly apply themſelves? My anſwer, begging the ladies pardon, is, that of all the ſciences which employ the prodigious activity of the human mind, a few only come within their reach: they are particularly not to meddle with

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the abſtract ſciences and knotty inveſtigations, as ſuch intruſions might cloud their minds, and blunt that keenneſs which conſtitutes a part of their excellence.

If this ſex has produced a Dacier, and a Chatelet *, they are inſtances extremely rare, and to be admired rather than imitated; and an increaſe of *literati* in petticoats, with their monades and ſcraps of Greek, is not at all to be deſired. Female learning muſt be of a ſmoother aſpect, more ſuitable to their features. Their application ſhould employ itſelf in the eaſy

* Anne le Fevre, wife to Mr. Dacier, has tranſlated Florus, Terence, and Homer, with very learned notes. Gabrielle Emilie de Breteuil, marchioneſs du Chatelet, has elucidated Leibnitz, and tranſlated Newton with a comment of her own. Her *Inſtitutions Phyſiques* are allowed by all judges to be a work of profound genius.

eaſy and agreeable parts of knowledge; and no character among them is ſo ridiculous, and at the ſame time ſo offenſive, as thoſe female divines, who, from a diſtempered party zeal, hold ſynods at their houſes, and broach extravagant opinions. A Bourignon *, a Virgin of Venice †, a Madam Guion ‡, excite greater diſguſt than the Epicurean Ninon §.

We

* Antoinette Bourignon, a famous viſionary, who purchaſed the iſland of Nordſtrand for a ſettlement of a kind of myſtics. She wrote nineteen large volumes, and ſpent a large fortune in diſſeminating her reveries.

† The Virgin of Venice was an old maid, who gave herſelf out to be the womens Meſſiah, and was ſupported in her impoſture by Poſtel.

‡ Madam Guion, a pretty woman, and very rich, lived in the laſt reign. She preached up Platonic love, and revived the extravagancies of Quietiſm.

§ Ninon L'enclos, an amorous young woman of the laſt age. The delicacy and candour of her mind threw a veil over the irregularity of her heart, which ſhe never offered to juſtify.

We would communicate to women, as the moſt proper walk of female genius, only the more pleaſing and more certain parts of ſcience. Whatever can awaken their curioſity, and embelliſh their imaginations, becomes them better than us; and this is a ſpacious field which they may exerciſe themſelves in, in conjunction with us; and even their ſuperiority will be no diſgrace to us.

Natural philoſophy, and hiſtory, alone form a moſt agreeable and proper ſtudy for the ſex. The former, not as taught ſyſtematically, but thrown into a ſeries of obſervations and experiments*, exhibits a ſpec-

* Several ladies have ſhewn a commendable curioſity in this point, and have had the principal phænomena

a ſpectacle highly deſerving the attention of a reaſonable being.

But how few women vouchſafe to caſt an eye on the wonders which Nature offers to them! Trifles take up all their attention, and Nature is dumb to thoſe whoſe narrow minds have no queſtions to put to her.

Yet, with a ſmall degree of obſervation, we ſhall neceſſarily be aſtoniſhed at the admirable ſymmetry in all the parts of the univerſe, and be deſirous of knowing the ſprings of ſuch wonders: this is the great book, open to all, and which

phænomena explained to them in regular courſes. It were to be wiſhed that their example may excite imitation; and, indeed, there are hopes of it, ſome women having already made collections of natural curioſities, much more valuable than the groteſque images of Saxony and China.

which two lovely eyes may, without tediouſneſs, peruſe in the country, or any where. The ladies cannot be too much exhorted to beſtow on it thoſe looks which they but too often throw away on unworthy objects.

Women are much more capable of obſervation, than is thought; they are only wanting in a right application of it. Where is the young girl who has not eagerly ran through romances, and childiſh ſtory-books, which can only vitiate her mind? Had ſhe employed the ſame time in the ſtudy of hiſtory, ſhe would, in the various ſcenes and viciſſitudes of the world, have met with more intereſting facts, and that valuable inſtruction, which truth alone can afford.

Theſe

Theſe repreſentations, found in the annals of mankind, are, of all things, the moſt fit to form both the judgement and the temper. Women, by the great ſhare they have ever had in ſignal events, and the different parts they have acted, may look on our records as theirs. Not a few of them have even written accounts of the different tranſactions which have paſſed under their eyes: among theſe are Mademoiſelle de Montpenſier, Madam de Nemours, Madam de Motteville, &c. Chriſtina de Piſan, whoſe father was aſtronomer to Charles V. has publiſhed that prince's life; and long before her, the princeſs Anne Comnenius compoſed the hiſtory of her own times. The ladies, therefore, are called upon to aſſert their rights, and

to

to draw from hiſtory, inſtructions for the happy conduct of life.

This ſtudy, which is at once ſo entertaining and uſeful, naturally leads to thoſe arts, which it is proper for the ſex to be ſomewhat leſs ſuperficially acquainted with. They are in themſelves too pleaſing to ſtand in need of any recommendation. All the objects which they offer, have an analogy with women, and, like them, make the moſt amiable appearance. The mind always finds an agreeable recreation in the ideas which painting, muſic, and poetry excite in it, eſpecially if conſonant to virtue. Theſe three pleaſing arts, in the laſt reign, conferred a diſtinguiſhed celebrity on Mademoiſelle Chero, who poſſeſſed the talents of a Sappho,

a Sappho, a M****, and a Roſalba, all in an equal degree.

By a familiar acquaintance with the arts, we in ſome meaſure acquire a new ſenſe. So agreeably has nature been imitated by them, they have even ſo often embelliſhed it, that the cultivation of them opens a copious ſource of new pleaſures. It is proper to provide ourſelves with a preſervative againſt laſſitude, by this addition to our natural riches; and to decline making ourſelves poſſeſſors of the many pleaſing objects which they have created, betrays ruſticity.

Let us baniſh all apprehenſions, that by womens application to theſe objects, the natural graces of their minds may ſuffer; ſo far from it, thoſe graces will be the more conſpicuous and powerful. Nothing

can

can be compared to the converſation of a woman who attends to the ornament of her mind, more than to her dreſs. In ſuch women every thing affects, and receives an addition which they alone can give. The pleaſing art of ſaying excellent things with eaſe, is peculiar to them; they improve mens genius, and impart to them an elegant facility, which they never acquire in the ſtudy.

But what reſource can the vacant mind of illiterate perſons afford? The futile ribaldry with which they labour to fill up the void of their converſation, ſoon flags; the barren ſtock of current reports, compliments, and faſhionable trifles, is ſoon exhauſted: this drives them to their laſt ſhifts, againſt the inſupportable tediouſneſs

tediouſneſs of ſilence, the murtherous ſhafts of calumny and ſlander; and this is no more than natural, for a converſation, without any ſolid ground to ſupport it, muſt be either frivolous or criminal.

There is one way only to make it more intereſting and diverſified, which is, for women, as taking the lead in our aſſemblies, to condeſcend to rectify their own taſte, and cheriſh it by uſeful reading. Their merit, when once known, will diſperſe that ſwarm of coxcombs, who labour to make them as contemptible as themſelves; while men of real worth will reſort to them, and thus they will have a court which may be truely called good company.

By this exchange they will be gainers, with regard to ſentiment,

and the like gaiety ſtill ſubſiſt; for merit is not of a dull, gloomy nature; on the contrary, a placid chearfulneſs is habitual among the polite and well-bred; and ſurely ſuch a diſpoſition is far preferable to the laughter and vociferation of ſtupid ignorance. Thoſe delicious companies where the La Fayettes, the Sevignés, and the La Sablieres, met with the Vivonnes, the Rochefoucaults, the Fares, muſt be allowed equal to our preſent aſſemblies; yet the converſation turned on literature, the fineſt improvements were gathered there, and great things were canvaſſed with eaſe and pleaſantry.

In a word, and I repeat it to the fair ſex, the only way to pleaſe, and pleaſe for a conſtancy, is, inſtead of taking up with a round of tales, or

common-

common-place thoughts, to acquire a ſtock of ideas whereby the mind may be ſtrengthened and enlarged. From acquired merit ariſe charms not ſubject to wither, like the roſes and lilies of a delicate complexion, and which prolong a handſome woman's ſway to the very winter of her life: what beauty began, accompliſhments of the mind perpetuate. If women value a laſting reign, inſtead of being only the pageants of a day, let them improve their intellects by a little ſtudy, and the converſation of men of letters; thus will they ſecure themſelves againſt ſolitude, the uſual lot of old-age, and ſhine in the combined excellencies of both ſexes.

Happily thoſe miſerable times are no more, when prejudice condemned the

the fair ſex, and the nobility, to a ſordid ignorance. The ridicule * thrown on a pedantic affectation of erudition, had brought even common learning into ſuch diſrepute, that for ſome time women prided themſelves in a faulty pronunciation even of their own native tongue; though there have not been wanting ſome, who, diſdaining the yoke of a ſilly cuſtom, have dared both to think and ſpeak juſtly; and we ſtill ſee not a few who are not aſhamed of being better ſcholars than moſt of our fribbles and court-butterflies.

* Moliere, in his play of The *Femmes Sçavantes*, meant only to expoſe the pride of ſmatterers, and has undeſignedly hurt all kinds of knowledge; an idle diſpoſition has made women ſtop far ſhort of the proper lengths they ſhould go.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Employments of Women.

A Woman carries about a work-bag, which is always ſhut; it is continually dangling at her ſide, in company, at the play, and even at church. This is paying homage to induſtry; it is an acknowledgement that ſhe inwardly accounts work a duty. For my part, I think her very much to be pitied, in thus taking up with a vain ſhow, which cannot ſave her from the burthen of idleneſs.

Work is a law of nature, and the obſervance of it conſtitutes the glory of mankind; neither rank, fortune, ſex, nor any reaſon whatever, ex-

empts from it, and nothing is more deſpicable than to avoid it. Doing nothing is, in ſome meaſure, returning into a ſtate of non-exiſtence.

How then can our ladies preſume to ſhare the honours with which ſociety recompenſes the labours of their aſſiduous huſbands, whilſt they themſelves ſpend their days in a remiſsneſs detrimental both to themſelves and their families? Do they think they owe no returns for the advantages they receive? If dignity and wealth diſpenſe them from that ſucceſſion of labours, which women of a lower condition undergo, no rank can exempt them from the general appointment. Placed in another ſphere, they are likewiſe obliged to another kind of action ſuitable to their education and ſtation. I would

entreat

entreat the ladies in high life, to condeſcend to examine themſelves by theſe principles; for, as to women of the lower claſs, it muſt be allowed, that in this way they do more than their taſk: but the generality of others ſeem rather to abuſe life, and to be engaged in a fooliſh emulation, who ſhould waſte moſt time, which afterwards no ſorrow can recover.

The woman of ſpirit (and where is there one who is not ſuch?) riſes late, ſpends the reſt of the morning at the toilette, and often receives viſits there in a diſhabille, for which airy is too ſoft an appellation. In the afternoon ſhe again ſits down at her toilette, to dreſs for the play, or the public walks: from thence ſhe goes to ſhine at ſome formal ſupper,

returning home very late; and the next morning recommencing the ſame rational courſe.

Yet this manner of life left too much time on a woman's hands; and, to get rid of it, they introduced a game admirably adapted to fill up thoſe vacancies. This has likewiſe increaſed their retinue, and the company is now ſo much the more numerous, inaſmuch as both the blockhead and man of merit make the ſame figure at a quadrille table *.

Some diverſion is neceſſary, ſay our pretty gameſters. Moſt certainly; but might not a more noble diverſion be ſtruck out, than the con-

* Quadrille being grown ſtale, ſome houſes have ſubſtituted a game, called Brelan, inſtead of it; which, beſides the loſs of time, is accompanied with a kind of ſharping, conſtituting a part of the game itſelf, and ſuppoſed to render it more ſpirited.

conteſting for money, and fomenting that ſelfiſhneſs which is already but too predominant? beſides, can a ſtated daily ſitting, of four or five hours, that is, of above one third of life, without any other converſation than what ariſes from red and black ſpots printed on paper, be called an amuſement?

This childiſh way of killing time, brought into ſuch vogue by the ladies, far from being a relaxation, is a ſerious buſineſs, impairing their health. In the fineſt part of the year, and even when in the country, regardleſs of all the natural pleaſures which ſurround them, they eagerly ſit down, ſhuffling and dealing cards around till midnight, amidſt a tumult of fluctuating paſſions; a phrenſy which, fixing them perpe-

tually in a chair, brings on them all the evils conſequent to the want of exerciſe.

In vindication of this faſhionable idleneſs, they plead weakneſs of conſtitution; though it is this very idleneſs which weakens their conſtitutions, and gradually deſtroys the ſpring and force of the human ſyſtem. Women, to be ſure, are not made to ſtruggle with the ſame fatigues as men; yet has nature added to their beauty a degree of ſtrength which forms a part of it, and has proportioned their vigour to what it requires from them. The alacrity with which they give themſelves up for whole days to violent exerciſes, ſuch as dancing *, is certainly no indication

* Three beautiful women, very well known, were, ſome years ago, for trying their ſtrength at than

dication of their being created to paſs their lives in a ſtate of ſlothfulneſs.

It is ſomewhat difficult to reconcile the prodigious activity of women at the call of pleaſure, or the impulſe of paſſions, with that indolent life to which many confine themſelves. Sometimes they ſeem all fire; at others they ſcarce breathe. Theſe are extremes common to the whole ſex, and not ſeldom ſeen to follow each other cloſely in the ſame perſon.

In ſome this indolence is a dangerous calm, ſucceeding a tempeſt of the paſſions; in others it is a

that exerciſe; they were in the country, and after tiring all the gentlemen of the company, they made the peaſants, who ſucceeded them, likewiſe give over. This petty triumph, however, coſt one of them her life.

want of reſolution, under which they can neither act nor think: in all it is the very worſt diſtemper which can befall them; it is a ruſt which inſenſibly preys on the body, and totally arreſts the activity of the mind.

This languor, ſo common in capital cities, is always the puniſhment of inactivity; it is a deep ſleep, which requires violent ſuccuſſions to be rouſed from it. Our vapoured belles are not to be cured by their little excurſions in a coach, or a turn or two in a gravel-walk; ſomething farther is to be done; and Dr. Tronchin * muſt have been thoroughly perſuaded

* This worthy Gerevan, who was rather a philoſopher than a phyſician, from a conviction that inactivity is as much the ſource of all the diſeaſes of the body, as of the vices of the ſoul, ſet ſome

perſuaded of this, for he preſcribed to tender ladies forced marches, and violent exerciſe.

This was the only way to draw them out of that melancholy condition, into which they had been plunged by eaſe and affluence.

If the ladies are diſpoſed to enjoy life, let them return to nature, and to action. Activity is certainly to be preferred to a ſtate of indolence, which is nothing more than a kind of death. The young flutterer, who makes ſuch a buſtle wherever ſhe goes, and in an evening drives to twenty places, may come to be more ſerious, and moderate her petulant

ſome of his female patients to rub out their cloſets; others, to make a little garden, &c. Had he ſtayed longer, the faculty muſt have been ruined; for he would univerſally have dried up all the ſprings of illneſs.

activity; but it is ſeldom that a woman, brought to extreme lowneſs of ſpirits, ever prevails on herſelf to make an effort, and ſhake off the enfeebling yoke of indolence. A river, after overflowing its banks, returns into its bed; but a muddy fen always remains ſuch.

But is there no other way to avoid the dark vapours ariſing from inactivity, than by running into levity? Yes, there is certainly a prudent mean, but little is it ſought after; and our beauties might very well be divided into the indolent and the volatile, as well as into the brown and fair.

They who are in no danger of indolence, give themſelves up to a diſſipation which renders them too public, and excites in them a long-

ing

ing for whatever meets their eyes: a rapid ſucceſſion of whims keeps them in perpetual agitation; to-day they are taken with ſome toy; to-morrow a dog, or a parrot, ſhall be their favourite; and the next object of their wiſe affections may be ſome frightful China figure: ſo that their minds, harraſſed by this perpetual change of trifles, have no repoſe; and, amidſt an habitual leiſure, they complain of not having a moment to themſelves.

Thus it is that, as one of the ancients ſays, life is ſpent in doing nothing, or ſomething quite foreign from what we ſhould be doing. Well would it be if our ladies, at their evening toilettes, committed to paper the ſubſtance of each day's tranſactions: they would then ſee that

that what I ſay is equally applicable to them; and that they do nothing, or what juſt amounts to nothing.

In a word, work there ſhould be, and real and daily work: a taſk muſt be ſet to the body, as well as the mind; knotting is no more deſerving of the name of work, than flirting a fan: the occupation muſt be ſuch as requires care; for example, needle-work of every kind, drawing, &c. All theſe things women learn in their childhood, and ſurely it is not to forget them in their youth. Whatever be their rank, a regular courſe of work will add luſtre to it. Without this, the vacant mind will either fall into a ſluggiſh inactivity, or give itſelf up to the firſt paſſion which may happen to be excited in it.

If

If we read what the ancients ſay of the way of living of the women in their time, womens working will no longer be thought a matter of indifference. Homer tells us of princeſſes, who, beſides the management of their houſehold and domeſtic cares, made apparel for their huſbands and families. Andromache is repreſented by him to us as buſied in embroidering; Helena made beautiful tapeſtry, enriched with embroidery; and the artful Penelope's web is known to every body. Theocritus, Terence, and Virgil, all the writers, both ſacred and profane, are unanimous in ſpeaking of female induſtry and laborioufneſs: at Rome, even in its degenerate times, the women retained their domeſtic virtues; and, according

cording to Suetonius, all the clothes of the emperor Auguſtus were made by his empreſs or ſiſter.

So recently as the laſt century, it was cuſtomary for women to employ themſelves in uſeful occupations. Ladies of the firſt quality did not think their duty fulfilled in playing a little with a ſhuttle. France has ſtill ſeveral ſeats, the whole furniture of which was made by the lady of the houſe.

Inſtances, it is hoped, will never be wanting for inciting the ſex to action. The Germans, that wiſe nation, which has leaſt of any departed from its ancient manners, keep up in women that ſtrenuous ſpirit of induſtry, and aſſiduity in labour, ſo eminent in themſelves. The princeſſes, in all the courts of Germany,

Germany, ſit cloſely to work with their women about them, and do not think domeſtic affairs below their concern; but they would bluſh to be found idle. Far from taking it into their heads, that the ſcandalous privilege of doing nothing belongs to women, they demand and exerciſe their rights: they account the love of labour a virtue; a virtue which ſupports the reſt, and does honour to their ſex, even on a throne.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Diverſions.

WOMEN are perpetually talking of diverſions, and talk of them with an enthuſiaſm which deceives themſelves; for theſe diverſions, which are ſo eagerly followed, and of which they had formed ſuch delicious ideas, often prove nothing leſs than they had imagined. The fair one returns full of gravity from an aſſembly, where ſhe had promiſed herſelf a deal of entertainment; but ſhe hopes to be made amends at the next meeting, where probably ſhe may be as much diſappointed.

To

To avoid ſuch vain fatigues in the purſuit of pleaſure, women ſhould form to themſelves a right idea of it, and eſpecially beware of the falſe and ſeductive images ſuggeſted by too lively an imagination. This it is which continually carries them beyond reality, and promiſes tranſports and joys which are not in nature: they are ſplendid dreams, which, at our waking, leave us chagrined at the deluſion.

What women ſeek at a diſtance, is much nearer than they conceive; pleaſures are always at hand, but it is only with a happy diſpoſition that they can be ſeiſed: they are the offſpring of neceſſity, and unleſs called for by its voice, all purſuit is but ſo much labour loſt.

A walk,

A walk, after having been ſedentarily employed, gives a ſenſible pleaſure; and reſt becomes ſuch, in its turn, if preceded by ſome little fatigue. Every thing we do may be made a kind of pleaſure of, by doing it ſeaſonably. This viciſſitude, rightly ordered, is what renders life pleaſing; and thoſe who know not how to mingle buſineſs and relaxation, can have but little reliſh of it.

Now this is the fault of moſt of our belles; their exceſſive fondneſs of pleaſure, and their eager purſuit of it, keeps it at a great diſtance from them. They will not be told, that pleaſure muſt be purchaſed, and that nothing leſs than labour is the price of it; and that whoever declines the one, muſt go without the other.

They

They ſhould therefore know, that this pleaſure, which they ſo paſſionately adore, to be renewed, muſt be laid aſide. It is, in its very nature, a momentary ſtate, an agreeable ſally of the ſoul, recreating and enlivening it, when not frequent; but, if continued, would only fatigue and deaden it. The ladies, deſirous of perpetuating pleaſure, have endeavoured to diverſify and refine it: their luxuriant invention has multiplied the objects of entertainment, and is daily adding to the number; yet ſtill are they ſhort of their views: all theſe imaginary pleaſures, being founded only on vanity, make but a very faint impreſſion; indeed they are ſo many proofs, that, to fix pleaſure throughout the whole of life,

as

as ſome women would have it, is utterly impoſſible:

Beſides, is it the part of a rational creature to make diverſion its capital concern? She in whom this deſire predominates, is commonly neither a mother, wife, nor friend, nor ſo much even as a member of ſociety: for a party of pleaſure, or a ball, ſhe forgets every thing; and it is well if, in the whirl of her diſſipation, ſhe does not forget herſelf.

In reality, virtue is not always the laſt ſacrifice offered to inclination. When the common pleaſures pall by repeated enjoyment, the torpid ſoul muſt be roufed by ſomething more poignant. The vivacity which pleaſures derive from the tender paſſions, is a powerful allurement to women. Gallantry, to which they

have but too ſtrong a propenſity, opens new reſources in their hearts, and is the more dangerous, as, by accuſtoming it to violent emotions, it gives it an averſion for every thing that is calm and moderate.

From that inſtant the tranquil and innocent pleaſures, which Nature offers us at all times, are loſt on them; the heart has but a certain meaſure of ſenſation, which muſt be ſkilfully huſbanded. That of women is naturally more ſenſible than ours; but this ſenſibility they laviſh away on one favourite object which has chanced to pleaſe, ſo that no more is left for any other. Love takes poſſeſſion of their whole ſoul, bars up the avenues to it againſt every other ſentiment, and afterwards leaves it in a profound lethargy; ſhort

ſhort fits, ſoon followed by an excruciating coldneſs.

The pleaſures we are ſuſceptible of, are proportioned to the extent and capacity of the heart, which is not made for delights and extaſies, tranſporting it beyond itſelf; thoſe are a kind of convulſions, which cannot laſt; but there is an infinite number of pleaſures, which, if their impreſſion be leſs quick, are, on that very account, the more to be eſteemed: theſe pleaſures daily ſpring up in various ſhapes, and, far from excluding, combine with each other; they produce in the ſoul a gentle warmth, favourable to its health, and to preſerving it in a happy equality.

Theſe are the pleaſures which women may purſue without danger, and enjoy without trouble, and without

out remorſe. I pity, from my heart, all thoſe who are callous to ſuch charms, and who look upon a life, freed from the wild tumult of paſſions, as dull and melancholy. The pleaſures loſt by ſuch an inſenſibility, are infinitely preferable to all they can expect from a dangerous affection. A woman of wit and diſcretion chooſes entertainments where the mind is ſure to be a gainer, and that without any loſs to the heart.

A perſon of this valuable ſtamp makes all the varying ſcenes of ſociety matter of pleaſure or improvement to her. Nature and art preſent her with an inexhauſtible fund of delight; habituated to reflection, every thing ſpeaks and adminiſters delight to her. Indeed the mind which can curſorily paſs over ſo

many objects, without being affected by them, must be strangely debased; but where the generality of the sex find only an insipid entertainment for the eye, the woman of deeper comprehension meets with a new recreation and improvement to the mind.

The lowness of spirits which some women complain of, is so very far from being, as they imagine, a mark of their superiority, that it is the very worst malady to which the soul is subject, being a certain symptom of its bad constitution. To know not what to do with one's self, amidst innumerable objects, for employment and exercise, betrays a very narrow and groveling way of thinking; and a greater mark still of pusillanimity, is the way in which some

divert

divert their lowneſs of ſpirits. Yet is there more than one pretty woman, who will make a ſpectacle of herſelf, though it be but as a beautiful piece of clock-work.

I myſelf have known one of thoſe beauties, expiring under a lowneſs of ſpirits, which ſhe could not in the leaſt account for, ſtart up, in a fit of joy, at the appearance of a Siberian dog, ſent to her as a preſent; and on this creature did ſhe fix her affections, to ſuch a degree, as never to ſtir abroad, but made herſelf the dog's gaoler.

Our pleaſures, like our thoughts, take their bent from the greater or leſs elevation of the ſoul. A woman of talents, inſtead of chattering with a dog, or a bird, enjoys the exquiſite

melody of her harpſichord, heightening it with the accordant ſounds of her voice; her mind itſelf is attuned; and from this delight ſhe can betake herſelf to ſome book of inſtructive entertainment. Paultry romances, calculated to pleaſe and foment the reader's depravity, are not the books ſhe likes. Her own ſex affords her much more eſtimable writers.

A woman may make up a good library out of the compoſitions of female pens only. The Villedieus, the Deſhoulieres, the Sevignés, the Laſuzes, and many more, rival our greateſt male authors. The illuſtrious Fontenelle wrote ſome pieces, in conjunction with Mademoiſelle Bernard, and, in our time, would own himſelf out-done by Madame de

de Stall *. We may glory, that the race of theſe tranſcendent women is not yet extinct: we have ſtill our Thalias for dramatic pieces, and our Clios for hiſtory; and a flouriſhing academy with pleaſure ſees, among its members, the elegant imitatreſs of Milton.

In converſing with ſuch models, a woman of wit enjoys a uſeful recreation, and improves the happy gift of expreſſing herſelf with eaſe and dignity. A rational perſon chooſes ſuch pleaſures as, while they

* This lady, who, before her marriage, was known by the name of Mademoiſelle de Launay, wrote an inimitable letter to Mr. Fontenelle, concerning Mademoiſelle Teſtard's Hobgoblin: her other works are two volumes of Memoirs, in an exceeding eaſy ſtile, with ſome Comedies, acted at the late ducheſs du Maine's, whoſe houſe was the reſort of perſons of merit of every kind.

gently gladden the mind, contribute to the refinement of reaſon.

The theatre, under proper reſtrictions, might be made an improving entertainment. We have many plays which tend to form the taſte, and elevate the ſoul; but a woman, who knows herſelf, will hardly be ſeen at thoſe inferiour kind of exhibitions, where licentious ſongs excite the loud laugh of a brutiſh pit, while her ſex bluſh with confuſion.

Such plays may give a vicious turn to a woman's imagination, but never can it receive any good from them; and the imagination, as being a copious ſource of pleaſures, ſhould be carefully preſerved from futility and depravation. There is not a moment, in which a brilliant imagination

tion cannot ſtrike out pure and delicate pleaſures: it is from the imagination that ariſes the ſoft complacency we feel amidſt meadows, groves, ſtreams, zephyrs, and the warbling of nightingales; it even enriches the ſplendid decorations of the univerſe, and diffuſes over objects a vivid tint, which gives them freſh luſtre.

Life, to thoſe who make a proper uſe of it, is ſtrewed with pleaſures of all kinds, delectable both to the ſenſes and to the mind; but the latter is never more agreeably recreated than in the commerce of perſons of cultivated underſtandings, capable of improving and entertaining; two qualities which generally go together. Women cannot be too much exhorted to prefer the

converſation of ſuch valuable perſons, to the empty diſcourſe of thoſe ordinary gallants; one is all gain, the other all loſs. The converſation of the former elevates a woman's ſoul, inſpires it with a new way of thinking, diverts her from paſſions, and turns her very leiſure to advantage; whereas the nonſenſical diſcourſe of the others, debaſes a woman's mind, demeans her, and totally viciates her heart.

If the pleaſures of a ſelect company carry with them any improvement, it is the delights of friendſhip. I cannot conceive any grounds for excluding women from that generous connection; it is injuring them greatly: they are naturally of a more tender ſenſibility than men, and when gallantry has not enervated their hearts,

hearts, make very firm friends. Inſtead of enlarging on the advantages and delights of friendſhip, which may be called a double life, one friend living in another, I would recommend the delicate picture drawn of it by the Marchioneſs de Lambert *, the production of a heart made to enjoy all the ſweets thereof. There is no reading it, without wiſhing to meet with ſuch a friend, and being ſenſible that it is a good, to which nothing can be compared.

* The Marchioneſs de Lambert has written a little Treatiſe on Friendſhip, which is a maſterpiece, and far ſurpaſſes that of M. de Sacy, which, however, is not without its merit. This illuſtrious lady, whoſe beauty was equal to her underſtanding, amidſt a great number of valuable friends, never had one lover, and may be cited as a pattern. Though ſhe cultivated literature, and had the beſt of company at her houſe, ſhe was at the ſame time ſo good an œconomiſt, that, beſides a very ſplendid figure, ſhe had alſo wherewith to diſtinguiſh herſelf by very conſiderable liberalities.

Pleaſures which affect the ſoul without agitating it, are not made for the generality of the fair ſex, whom folly hurries on from one whim to another. Theſe women muſt be in a continual agitation; any calm interval would bring them to think, and overthrow their whole ſyſtem of extravagancy.

All their hyperbolical deſcriptions of their delightful amuſements are in vain. They may laugh as loud, and as long as they pleaſe, no perſon of diſcernment thinks them at all the happier. Felicity deteſts that tumult and confuſion, to which they give themſelves up; the hurry of the great world is not its element; it ſeeks privacy, and the company of a few perſons, whom nature has qualified for it: it is amidſt a ſmall number

number of virtuous and polished friends, that it loves to enjoy itself, confining itself to a small circle: it requires no greater number of witnesses, and disregards the applauses of an illiterate multitude.

CHAP. V.

Luxury of Women.

LUXURY has too much analogy to women, and appears too inviting to them, for a work, the end of which is their advantage, to omit ſo important an article. It is not my buſineſs here, to treat of it in a political ſenſe, but in its relation to a ſex which has openly declared itſelf its votary and protector.

I do not intend to hold forth the former times here, as models. The æra of luxury is that of the world. In all ages there have been women, who, by a wanton gratification of their vanity, made an ill uſe of what was

was at their diſpoſal. In the firſt ages the abuſes were leſs, poſſeſſions being fewer; but ſtill was luxury proportioned to the rudeneſs of the times, and the ſmall number of things diſcovered: the female Canadians pride themſelves no leſs in ſhells and feathers *, than our ladies in their jewels.

Riches have increaſed, and luxury has kept pace with it; it is of very great antiquity throughout all the Eaſt, where its exceſs was aſtoniſhing: the Athenian women carried it very far, and it roſe to the higheſt pitch in thoſe miſerable times, when all the treaſures of the univerſe were ſwallowed

* Paris has ſeen, under the name of the Little Le Blanc, a ſavage girl, who, in her fifteenth year, was found in the woods of Canada, to which ſhe had fled on killing another little girl, in a quarrel about a necklace.

ſwallowed up in one ſingle point. But all ages have afforded perſons who have regulated their deſires, and amidſt Petronii we meet with Senecas and Burrhi.

Our age, which will bear no compariſon with the moſt haughty times of the Roman empire, ſtill can produce many inſtances of a well-ordered and uniform moderation. Amidſt that baneful luxury, which is known to abſorb the largeſt fortunes, ſome women of the firſt rank diſcountenance, by their great example, all manner of parade. Filled with concern at the follies of their countrywomen, they are careful to reconcile what is due to rank and decorum with the graceful ſimplicity inſeparable from real magnanimity.

Public

Public and private good are equally intereſted to explode a luxury which corrupts all claſſes. The Roman ladies readily gave up their jewels to the public welfare: no ſuch ſevere ſacrifice is required of the French ladies; but it were to be wiſhed they would moderate a little their violent deſires after every thing that glitters.

A complacency in ſpecious things is what no one will offer to cenſure, excepting thoſe who are enemies both to mankind and themſelves: to revile and diſcourage all the ingenious and uſeful arts, from which ſociety derives many rational, or at leaſt innocent pleaſures, is a kind of ſavageneſs. Whoever declaims againſt decency, conveniency, and taſte, all which we owe to politeneſs and

and the arts, ſhews himſelf diſqualified for the ſweets of ſociety, and that the wolf and bear were fitter companions for him than the humane and elegant.

But is there no way of ſetting proper limits to the deſire after the conveniencies and enjoyments of life? Can our beautiful ſenſualiſts imagine this refinement, which is daily gaining ground among us, to be a good? Is ſuch exceſs of effeminacy adapted either to multiply their own pleaſures or ours?

It is eaſy to ſee, that this falſe elegance only leads women into a maze of errours: they are ſuddenly charmed with whims, which, in the ſmall ſpace of one day, are thrown aſide, and others of as little value taken in their room. They are continually

tinually retouching Nature's works; they crowd it with frivolous ornaments; ſo that it is disfigured quite beyond all knowledge.

Art is ſo thickly ſown in every part, that it has dazzled the fancy, and rendered it inſenſible to natural and ſimple beauties. The eſtimate of objects is not made according to their goodneſs, but their rarity; a certain way to judge amiſs of them.

Taſte, when not regulated by the goodneſs or utility of things, muſt vary as humour or opinion happen to ſhift; accordingly it has been ſeen perpetually fluctuating, without any apparent reaſon for it: ſo far from correcting ourſelves, as we imagined, by collecting wherewith to ſatisfy our ſucceſſive deſires, we in reality become impoveriſhed, our deſires pall,

pall, by full fruition; and that which, ſparingly uſed, would produce an alluring variety, loſes all its charms amidſt the profuſions of a miſtaken ſplendour.

Herein I appeal to not a few of our fine ladies, who, by indulging their ſenſes to exceſs, ſoon come to loſe all ſenſation: the voice of neceſſity is no longer known, and the impatient prevention of it has ſtripped pleaſure of that poignancy which neceſſity alone can give it. Luxury and indulgence, adding ſplendour to conveniency, have been before-hand with it, and thus the natural order of things is reverſed.

Women muſt be allowed to have greatly contributed to this faſcinating irregularity. Thanks to their active endeavours, nothing but jollity prevails

vails every where, and every thing is renewed as it were with the new moon. Painting, varniſhing, gilding, though ſucceſſively laviſhed, give birth again to each other daily in new forms.

Elegancy and magnificence are blended, or replace each other in coſtly variety; equipages are, now-a-days, bought as often as new clothes were formerly. Our furniture is become a changeable decoration; our apparel has very troubleſome theatrical ornaments; our meals are a parade, where, inſtead of chearfulneſs and a good appetite, the table is covered with ice and flouncings.

What are we the better for all this? Satiety has thrown a diſguſt over all our enjoyments: art has multiplied

multiplied its efforts to awaken our ſlumbering appetites, and all that opulence and pride has been able to compaſs, is a ſhort diverſion from a laſſitude, againſt which we have brought ourſelves to be without any permanent reſource.

Diſmal as theſe effects of luxury are, it ſtill continues the idol of the fair ſex. Some, to procure to themſelves thoſe glittering gewgaws, make no difficulty of departing from the paths of honour. A woman given up to little low paſſions, is willing to gratify them by means ſuited to her abject principles, and ſoon becomes hardened to the vileſt infamy.

But let us turn aſide from this part of the ſex, which is really a diſgrace to it: ſuch women, together with the bad of our ſex, may be

be ſuppoſed to have no admittance among good company: it is the converſation of thoſe women only, who have a regard for honour and virtue, which is deſireable for its rational entertainment.

I may aver, that it is this eſtimable part of the ſex, who are the greateſt ſufferers by luxury. Productive of confuſion and gallantry, it hurts the real deſtination of women: it ſubverts all the ſolid ſettlements they might expect, and indiſpoſes men from any ſerious connection with them.

Formerly a wife had no portion, and ſometimes even had a portion given for her; at preſent, when both beauty and fortune frequently unite, men marry with reluctancy, often very

very late, and a great many never marry at all.

How is it that thoſe two things which men love beſt, gold and beauty, cannot incline them to this ſweeteſt of all connections? It is the luxury of women which alone deters them. They are afraid, and very juſtly, of a parade, which, through the ſanction of cuſtom, is become a kind of neceſſity, and, being always carried beyond the bride's fortune, threatens deſtruction to that of the huſband.

It is only in the ages of luxury that marriage is cried down. Moſt men are really frightened at its charges, which by caprice and pride are become very burthenſome, if not ruinous: two ſorts of people only are now ſeen to enter into this formidable

formidable ſtate; the populace, whoſe diſtreſs is ſuch as ſcarce to admit of any increaſe; and thoſe who think an immenſe fortune a compenſation for any thing, though of this no ſmall part goes away the very firſt day in ſuperfluities.

Thus beauty and virtue are ſcarce held in any account; and as great fortunes are rare, eſpecially among perſons of high rank, the fate of little heireſſes is to linger away li in a melancholy celibacy, or to up with an unequal match.

The Political Legacy, attribu to Colbert, mentions a young l of high birth, who being compelle by her parents, to marry a perſon o mean deſcent, broke her heart with- in the twelvemonth. Such matches are not uncommon in our times, but

without any of thoſe diſmal conſequences: a brilliant equipage makes amends for a huſband's ill qualities; an aigrette, or a diamond ſprig, revive a fair one from death: dazzled by the glittering bauble, ſhe gladly quits her own illuſtrious family, and mingles with meanneſs and with infamy.

The grand conſideration, with the bulk of women, concerning a huſ-nd, is, whether his fortune will ver the inſatiable cravings of ry; and, of courſe, they eſti-e men by their appearance: an n more of embroidery ſhall deter-ne their preference; otherwiſe ould the very loweſt tradeſmen, when bedaubed with lace, meet with ſo gracious a reception from them? Yet is there nothing ſtrange in this:

for

for a woman's fancy continually running on jewels, dreſs, &c. it ſo fills her head with colours, that ſhe has no attention left for objects which much better deſerve it; and this meanneſs of ſpirit is increaſed by their converſations, of which dreſs and ornaments uſually form the principal ſubjects. If a bride be brought on the carpet, a thouſand queſtions are aſked about her gowns and laces; whether ſhe wears diamonds, has a coach finely varniſhed, &c. for the huſband, they ſcarce beſtow a word on him. The eſſential qualities they ſlur over, dwelling only on the drapery: is it then ſurpriſing, that they are ſo often miſled by a caſt of mind which enables them only to ſee the ſuperficies of things? In the mean time, what

real

real diſtinction can be expected from all this tinſel? When we ſee whatever wealth can purchaſe, or taſte invent, proſtituted to the dreſs, furniture, and equipages of the ladies, what value is to be placed on a parade laviſhed away on ſuch beings?

A ſtockjobber's wife, at a country palace (for ſeat is too mean an appellation) after a ſumptuous entertainment, preſented the whole company, which was very numerous, with jewels, and coſtly toys, by way of lottery. The liveries of illuſtrious families, now extinct, crowd the anti-chambers of the loweſt of men; and women of the meaneſt extraction figure in the ſame glare of magnificence with ladies of the higheſt rank. Is it then a mark of true elevation of mind in the latter,

to

CHAP. VI.

Womens Dreſs.

I Now come to that article of luxury which, of all others, lies neareſt a woman's heart, and, conſequently, in which it will be the moſt difficult to effect a reformation: it is even the riſquing their diſpleaſure, to make a direct attack on ſo intereſting a branch of their addreſs. I am very far from any ſuch deſign: the chief end of all their forecaſt and nicety, in raiſing the elegant ſtructure of their dreſs, is too much in favour of the men, for them to harbour the leaſt thought of demoliſhing it.

The view of women, in dreſſing themſelves out with ſo much care, is very probably to pleaſe, and, as I am inclined to think, to pleaſe us. This, to be ſure, is making us the natural judges of their graces; and, of courſe, we are entitled to the freedom of giving them ſome admonitions, and even of delivering our opinions, concerning the particulars of that external appearance, in which we could wiſh to ſee them.

Women have concluded, that nature is to be aided by art, and that the latter can impart additional luſtre to their charms. I do not ſay it is a miſtake: dreſs, uſed with diſcretion, places beauty in its full light; but they ſeem to me to have ſometimes made an ill uſe of theſe aids.

From

From the advantage which a little ornament gives to beauty, they have been led to imagine, that the more ornaments, the more charms; and have ſo far put this falſe maxim in practice, that, beſides jewels, and gold and ſilver, they are crouded with ribbons, laces, millerets, pompons, &c. Flowers, feathers*, all the products of nature, have either been inſerted, or imitated, in the ſeveral pieces of their dreſs; ſtuffs of all colours have been uſed with enormous profuſion, ſo that the clothing of two women now will take up as much as would ſuffice to hang a large room.

* The two blue feathers in the wings of a jay have ſo far taken the ladies eyes, as to be uſed for ornaments, and ſome gowns have been ornamented with the ſpoils of no leſs than four thouſand jays.

What has been the effect of theſe accumulated decorations? The charms of the perſon are loſt amidſt this aſtoniſhing load of attire; the multitude of gewgaws drowns the regularity of the features; and the ſhape is hid under the looſe circumference of the drapery; ſo that the woman is, as it were, buried under them, and all of her, that is ſeen, is the aſtoniſhing variety of her attire.

This, to be ſure, was not what women intended: the firſt ornaments they invented may be ſuppoſed to have been fitter for their views; but the deſire of exceeding each other has kindled an emulation among them, who ſhould run into the greateſt exceſſes; and thus have they departed more and more from

leſt a plain ſameneſs of dreſs ſhould ſoon ceaſe to operate the intended effect, they have recourſe, from time to time, to ſuch changes as may attract freſh notice.

From that principle is derived that ſucceſſion of varying modes, by which we ourſelves are in no ſmall meaſure carried away: it is an artifice of the ſex, for giving the grace of novelty to the ſame perſon, that, by means of new appearances, ſhe may come forth as a freſh object of admiration. It is to guard againſt our fickleneſs, that women, ever intent on the ways of pleaſing, daily invent new ornaments.

The wind is not more variable than the mode of dreſs, and the Courier of Novelty often comes too

late *. Amidſt ſuch a diverſity of humours, women can hardly hit the mark always; and, indeed, ſome of their inventions are ſo groteſque, that, inſtead of ſetting them off, they quite diſfigure them.

For inſtance, it is with concern we ſee the graces of their perſon buried in an enormous hoop, out of all proportion to their bodies: thouſands and thouſands of times have they been told, that the *white* took away all motion from their countenance, and that *red* alone effaced that lovely freſhneſs of complexion, which is ſo charming in our eye: ſtill cannot they be brought to give any credit to theſe truths. I can compare

* A periodical paper, publiſhed in France, which may be looked on as an oblique criticiſm on our age.

compare them only to an ignorant fellow, who, having an exquiſite ſtatue, cauſed it to be gilded; ſo theſe paint their faces, that they look like ſo many ancient Bacchanalian nymphs, and vainly imagine, that painting their faces gives to their eyes a more piercing radiancy. This cuſtom, which is worthy only of the moſt ſavage nations*, transforms the moſt beautiful faces into painted pagods.

The ladies will be pleaſed to forgive this ſally againſt the abuſes of the toilette; but who can keep his temper, when he ſees them take ſo much pains to leſſen their beauty?

One

* It is not at all unlikely that this painting is of ſavage origin; it was little uſed before our acquaintance with thoſe countries, and every body knows, that the female ſavages paint their bodies, and eſpecially affect red.

One cannot forbear ſolliciting them in their own behalf.

Men, always more concerned for the preſervation of their beauty than they are themſelves, have conſtantly declared againſt all modes which were a blemiſh to it; yet, contrary to all their affectionate remonſtrances, the head-dreſs, though of ſo great an influence over the features, has undergone the moſt aſtoniſhing metamorphoſes. Once the face was ſunk two feet under a ſort of mitre, then, but moſt improperly, called a commode *: afterwards its breadth was extended to an equality with its height, and might be ſaid to ſhroud the whole face; the very arms, ſurmounted

* Paradin mentions a monk, who went about preaching continually againſt thoſe frightful *commodes*, and, to his immortal honour, preached them out of countenance.

mounted with ridiculous *epaulettes*, were loſt amidſt a vaſt contexture of ornamental furs. Our mothers enlarged their natural ſhapes with fardingales, ſlaſhed ſtuffs, and furbelows on furbelows; and, now-a-days, their daughters, inheriting all their ſpirit, not only bury their ſhape within a ludicrous incloſure of hoops, but do not ſo much as ſpare the complexion and beauties of the face, laying on it a moſt offenſive varniſh.

The laſt article is too important for pleaſantry. To have murmured at womens incumbering themſelves with fantaſtical aſſortments of dreſſes, as overgrown ruffs, ſcarfs, fardingales, &c. this, at moſt, can warrant only a ſlight charge of levity, with little diminution of our eſteem for them; but what directly affects

their perſons, is the paint, and double layer of red*: it is, if I may be permitted to tell them ſo, an abſolute proof of their vitiated taſte, and a ſort of attempt againſt themſelves, which we can by no means overlook.

Women ſhould truſt more to their charms, and leſs to the little devices of art. All the graces practiſed at the looking-glaſs never come up to thoſe which nature has ſo plenteouſly beſtowed on them; all thoſe ornaments, in which they are ſo fondly nice, do not ſupply the want of natural charms, and often are a detriment

* Another object of cenſure, is that multitude of patches, glaring indications of coquettry, and without any additional charm; but, at preſent, all that is aſked, is the ſuppreſſion of ſome, the bigneſs of which makes them look more like plaſters than ornaments.

triment to them. Jewels, gold, and ſilver, rich brocades, add nothing to beauty; or rather, beſides dividing the looks of the men, only make a woman, who has no ſhare of beauty, look the worſe.

Cannot women then perceive, that nature has provided their beſt ornaments, and left them ſcarce any thing to do in that precious article. I would adviſe them to rely on her for the means of pleaſing; there is no way ſo ſure to carry their point. Never is a woman ſo beautiful, as when ſhe does not know it: what improvement ariſes to her charms from her being perpetually buſied about them? Beauty ſtands in no need of cultivation, like the mind and heart; yet here it is a ſtanding

cuſtom,

cuſtom, among women, to be a little too negligent.

This is what demands their care, and unhappily with ſome it is the weak ſide; their labour here, ſo far from fruſtrating the end of it, will be crowned with the deſired ſucceſs.

It is, moreover, the moſt ſolid diſtinction, and the only one which perſons of high rank can put between them and the vulgar. The magnificence now in vogue confounds both under a like exterior; but behaviour, diſcourſe, and ſentiments, will ever eſtabliſh real and permanent diſtinctions.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The Temper and Humour of Women.

IN women, ſays La Bruyere, whim ever goes hand-in-hand with beauty, to be an antidote to it; and certainly nothing more infallibly eraſes the impreſſion made by a fine face, than a whimſical and capricious humour. Great are the obligations we owe to women on this head; and it is ſomewhat ſtrange, that thoſe who are the moſt fond of making conqueſts, uſually take the leaſt care to retain them.

Men univerſally allow, that, in all nature, there is not a more delightful object than a beautiful woman: they,

they, one and all, admire her; but it is ſeldom that ſhe makes herſelf loved for any time; whilſt a woman of little or no beauty, ſhall ſometimes kindle a very ardent and laſting paſſion.

This is what the ſex daily upbraid us with; but whilſt they mean to ridicule our taſte, they are in reality extolling our diſcernment; and, indeed, to ſteel one's ſelf againſt ſo powerful a charm as beauty, preferring to it endowments leſs brilliant, if more ſolid, ſhows its great ſtrength and exquiſiteneſs.

A fine woman, brought up amidſt adulation, and who has always been talked to only of her complexion, features, and gentility, generally remains ſuch as nature made her; a very fine object to be gazed at.

Ever

Ever taken up with ſomething about herſelf, ſhe frequently ſlips into an affectation which counter-acts her beauty; unlocking a bracelet, to diſplay a fine arm; then the neck-lace, or noſegay, muſt be ſet to rights, to ſhew her white neck; a laugh diſcovers her beautiful teeth; ſhe makes a falſe ſtep, ſhifts a patch, changes her attitude every minute, to excite freſh admiration in the men; whereas theſe geſtures have uſually a quite contrary effect *.

It is thus that ſome women find the way to ſpoil nature, by being over-curious to ſet it off: they faſhion their carriage, voice, and even their ſtyle; they affect a bor-

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* It is not without a good deal of trouble that they pleaſe leſs, ſays La Bruyere, ſpeaking of affectation.

rowed wit, which hurts their own; and the reſult of all this futile credulity is, a ſtarched air, ſuperſeding the gracefulneſs of their own natural eaſe. A profeſſed beauty has always ſome ſilly affectation about her, which brings her down to a level with the witling.

On the other hand, thoſe whom nature ſeems to have in ſome meaſure overlooked, endeavour to make up for its wrongs, in the acquiſition of amiable qualities: their minds, untainted by flattery, form themſelves to penetration and propriety; and their thoughts, not being ſo much taken up about themſelves, enlarge their ſphere; hence more knowledge, more capability of figuring in the world, and conſe-

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quently fewer whims, caprices, and affectations.

Their claims not being ſo many, they are leſs aſſuming in their behaviour, and form themſelves to a courteſy and mildneſs, which renders what beauty they have more pleaſing, from their making leſs account of it.

This is the behaviour which raiſes them to an equality with beauties, or rather gives them a ſuperiority. Temper and manners have very powerful charms, charms which make amends for the want of beauty, but the want of which no beauty can compenſate.

But theſe charms are little more common than beauty itſelf; not that they have been ſparingly beſtowed; nature has implanted, in the minds

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and inclinations of women, every requiſite for making their company deſireable: let them only follow theſe diſpoſitions, and they may depend on being lovely, and ever loved. It is an affecting conſideration, that too many among them baſtardize, as I may ſay, that happy ſoil, rooting up the roſes, to replace them with brambles.

In reality, how many women, far from betaking themſelves to the road pointed out by nature, ſeem to counter-act its intentions! Some, inſtead of mildneſs, their natural appanage, aſſume an imperious haughtineſs, kindling at the ſlighteſt contradiction, and impoſing their ſallies as laws: others, miſtaking effrontery for an air of grandeur, deſpiſe modeſty, as a mean virtue;

and,

and, beſides an overbearing freedom in all their behaviour, a peremptory pride diſplays itſelf in their countenance and nod: ſome others, inſtead of that placid ſerenity ſo ſuitable to their ſex, affect a gloomineſs and melancholy. They are no ſooner out of bed, than they ſet up their lamentations; every thing vexes them, even to provocation; they wiſh themſelves in their grave; and thus, inſtead of that pleaſure and feſtivity, for which nature intended them, they diffuſe around languor and ſadneſs.

There is another diſpoſition of quite a different caſt; I mean that of ſome buſtling women, who, ſetting themſelves above the decorums of their ſex, give into every public irregularity, run about from ſhop to

ſhop,

ſhop, from viſit to viſit, and if they are not at a ball, the play, or in a large company, think themſelves out of the world. Their houſes, on ſome days, are made a place of public reſort, crouded with the moſt arrant cockſcombs of our ſex, who are, indeed, the fitteſt company for them *.

This claſs, known by the appellation of female rakes, ſeem to make the diſgrace of their ſex their ſtudy. The actreſſes are the reſpectable models after which they copy, and that, not only in their indecent air, carriage,

* At Paris there are ſome houſes founded on the following plan: they are a ſort of coffee-houſes, where any one, if well dreſſed and diſpoſed to play, is admitted. Now, where the main concern is to have a large company, it cannot be well choſen.

riage, and dreſs, but ſome have even adopted their very manners.

All theſe irregularities, and many more, which out of reſpect to the ſex I omit, are not natural to it, and are ſtill unknown in places where luxury and ill example have not yet made their way. Caprice is the offspring of leiſure and indulgence. Women of a ſoft, indolent life, muſt neceſſarily be the prey of ſome particular kinds of folly, or take them all up ſucceſſively, as they offer themſelves to their unguarded fancy.

The latter is the way with ſome; an unſettled tribe, whoſe temper is not to be known, or rather who have none: you ſee in them a ſudden tranſition, from an intemperate gaiety to a ſullen ſilence; from the

moſt liſtleſs indolence, to an eager vivacity: what yeſterday was their delight, to-day they cannot endure. Such women fly from one extreme to the other, and alternately exhibit all the irregularities of the human ſpecies.

But I drop this diſagreeable enumeration: beſides, it might cauſe me to be ſuſpected of writing a ſatyr on the ſex, than which nothing is farther from my intention. That inchanting ſex, unhappily, can but too eaſily procure forgiveneſs, and even bring us to countenance its follies. Indeed, when its errors riſe ſo high as to affect the happineſs of ſociety, beauty may, in ſuch a caſe, be ſaid to forfeit its claims. The man of ſenſe will take care to avoid the treacherous allurements, under which

which lurks a bad temper, knowing that no thraldom can be ſo wretched, as that of loving what he cannot eſteem.

But, when perſonal attractions are combined with excellency of temper, and enlivened with a gentle gaiety, then beauty's ſway ſtands on a ſure baſis. A woman, in whom theſe advantages meet, is both an ornament and bleſſing to ſociety: as beauty heightens the lovelineſs of the temper, this makes a return in the graces it imparts to the features; the qualities of the ſoul diſplay themſelves in the countenance, and embelliſh even beauty itſelf.

I muſt repeat it, the ſubſtance of an engaging temper is mildneſs and gaiety; with thoſe two qualities a woman muſt pleaſe: mildneſs con-

ciliates all hearts; it is an amiable kind of inſtinct, derived from nature, and improved by a good education. To engaging manners women owe the ſtability of their empire, and the leſs power they aſſume, the more they have.

Politeneſs is only that very ſame mildneſs reduced to an art; it is the mark of a good nature, and performs its offices: but theſe externals, if not founded on a real goodneſs of heart, ſoon betray themſelves; and then it becomes an hypocriſy, which meets with but few dupes.

It is the ſame with chearfulneſs: a happy turn of mind is by no means to be confounded with a falſe merriment, which ſome women put on, to make themſelves more agreeable. Very different is it from that

boiſterous mirth, to which our female rakes ſo wildly give themſelves up, and which they are ever for promoting. A mind not to be relieved from laſſitude, but by ſuch frantic jollity, may be pronounced not in a good ſtate: it is like thoſe conſtitutions which cannot ſubſiſt without ſtrong liquors.

Such deſultory mirth is the portion of folly and humour, and generally ſuperſeded by dejection and ſullenneſs. Chearfulneſs, if much below theſe fits, is ever more equable and uniform, and denotes an orderly mind, and an eaſy heart. The ſerene and ſmiling air is ſeldom or never ſeen habitually with vice and choler: all the expreſſions of thoſe paſſions which diſturb the heart, are as immoderate as their cauſes.

This equableneſs, with the women delighting in buſtle and tumult, is want of ſpirit; they ridicule it as the mark of an humble genius. Habituated to that petulant vivacity, which quick paſſions inſpire, they account a modeſt woman a dull creature, fit only to ſpoil company: and, indeed, what can be done with a woman who makes a point never to ſpeak ill of her acquaintance, and is never known to throw out expreſſions, of which, as the phraſe is, a tranſparent gauze prevents the indecency? Such a woman, who chooſes to be ſilent, rather than have recourſe to malignancy or ribaldry, muſt, to be ſure, be a ſimpleton, from whom nothing can come, worthy the hearing of a ſpirited

rited company, where every thing is ſacrificed to laughter and loquacity.

But very different will our opinion be, on taking into conſideration the compaſs of knowledge, and the fertility of wit, required to carry on a converſation of pleaſantry, without the ſupplements of ſatyr, or indecency. A licentiouſneſs, deſtructive of the good-will or regard we owe one another, is but too much in vogue. Moſt of thoſe witticiſms, or ſmart ſayings, which are crowned with ſuch burſts of laughter, owe thoſe applauſes only to the depravation or malignity of the hearers.

A woman of merit ſcorns to purchaſe applauſe at ſuch a rate: ſhe has no notion of ſacrificing either modeſty or friendſhip to the ridiculous vanity of a pointed ſarcaſm,

or ambiguous epigram. She who has recourſe to ſuch ſcandalous ſhifts, betrays a foul ſoul, and barren intellects. It is an eaſy matter to appear ſmart, when all regard to morality, and the good name of others, is thrown aſide.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Love and Gallantry.

LOVE, in this, reſembles ambition, that both, when well conducted, lead to the moſt glorious actions. It is only in depraved perſons, that love is a vice: it may be compared to a fire, which emits ſalutary or noxious fumes, according to the nature of the ſubſtances which it burns. In vicious hearts it is a principle of much evil; whereas in great ſouls it is refined, and ſtimulates them to the moſt generous efforts.

Thus every thing is to be feared or hoped from love: the eſſential

point is a right choice of the object; the lover generally ſtudies to conform himſelf to it. This choice is of the utmoſt importance to women, whoſe hearts are ſo naturally inclined to this paſſion, that they love before they know whom they are to love.

No ſooner does a girl begin to know herſelf, than an indeterminate tenderneſs riſes in her heart, and, to fix itſelf, wants only an object: in their early years it produces thoſe warm and tender connections, and all thoſe little effuſions of heart, obſerved in girls when in their teens.

Afterwards, when they enter on the world, they curiouſly view every thing around them. The compliments paid them by men, and the pleaſure of ſeeing themſelves fol-

lowed, diſcloſe in them ſentiments, the nature of which was unknown to them; and their heart ſoon declares for the man whom it likes beſt.

This happy perſon is uſually the man who is moſt complaiſant, and moſt forward: it is with toilettes as at courts, inſtead of the worthieſt carrying the prize, it generally falls to the moſt adulatory, and the moſt aſſiduous; qualities not always combined with true merit, and for want of which it often meets with a cold reception from the ladies and the great. This preference, ſo inconſiderately beſtowed, expoſes women to the moſt unhappy miſtakes, the leaſt deſerving men being the moſt ſubmiſſive, and the moſt watchful to pleaſe them: they firſt inſi-

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nuate themſelves, under the appearance of an unreſerved devotion, and thus ſoon become maſters to their miſtreſſes. They go ſtill farther; they ſometimes become their tyrants, and bring the moſt painful grief on thoſe to whom they had vowed perpetual obedience: but perfidy uſually treads on the heels of artifice and ſeduction.

Women would do well to forbear their declamations againſt the falſity and wickedneſs of men; the fault is theirs, to fall into ſuch coarſe-ſpun ſnares as are laid for them. There are, to be ſure, men determinately falſe and deceitful, who follow women out of vanity. Theſe carry on their ſeducements in all poſſible ſhapes; but it is not difficult to ſee into them. The mean adorations,

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and exceſſive complaiſance, by which they endeavour to pleaſe, ſhould create a ſuſpicion, and induce the ladies rather to miſtruſt ſuch unbecoming homages.

That ſervile obſequiouſneſs, which women ſhould immediately look upon as the mark of fraud, and make them apprehend a ſurprize, is the very thing which allures them, and renders them ſoon the victims of perjury and inconſtancy; the juſt puniſhment of a diſpoſition which fixes their inclinations on ſuperficial qualities. It is this diſpoſition which draws after them a crowd of empty fops, who, if they have any meaning at all, it is only to deceive: ſomething pleaſing in a man's perſon, a giddy air, a perpetual levity, ſupply the place of valuable endowments,

endowments, as they love to ſee themſelves reflected in their lovers, and in them love only their own likeneſſes.

What, indeed, are the generality of thoſe men who boaſt among themſelves of turning women's brains? Theſe arrogant conquerors of the ſex are, almoſt one and all, the moſt ſhallow creatures of ours, objects of ridicule and laughter. Amidſt all the pride of dreſs, and airs equally affected, few of them have ever underſtanding enough to vary their impertinencies, all copying one from the other. To a vacant appearance add a low jargon of ſoft nonſenſe, effeminate airs, imaginary ſucceſſes with the ladies, a real ignorance and impertinence; theſe make up what women call a

pretty

pretty fellow, and it is odds if ſuch a one be not the very reverſe of the man of honour.

Theſe are the aſſiduous addreſſers of the ladies, and have introduced an habitual gallantry, which borders very nearly on affectation and folly. Since this levity has ſuperſeded love, the intercourſe between both ſexes is become leſs ſerious, and more looſe, being made up of inſinuating chat, and pretty futilities. A generous love of one woman is turned into a vague liking of the whole ſex; and the language of the heart, which is always joyous, becomes the inſipid conveyance of coquettry and vanity.

It is a queſtion with me, whether the ladies are any gainers by the articles of entertainment? But I maintain, that the heart has been a great

great loſer: all thoſe ſoft declarations, ſo liberally diſtributed among the ſex, are quite foreign from ſentiment. It is palpable that the compliments and praiſes, which a man ridiculouſly pours forth on all women, without a ſingle thought of them, and the formal airs with which they anſwer him, are no more than reciprocations of deceit.

Amidſt this univerſal gallantry, it is true, that engagements of preference may be formed, which are diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of heart-felt connections. But are there many of thoſe connections in which the heart is really concerned? The rapidity of their birth and extinction, I think, ſufficiently denotes the contrary: they are only looſe ties, formed for a time by the love

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of pleaſure, and ſoon diſſolved by caprice.

Theſe frail ties, indeed, ſatisfy thoſe women who mind language more than ſentiment, and are well enough ſuited to men given up to the follies of a heated imagination: both, being always actuated by illuſive images of voluptuouſneſs, are not ſuſceptible of any heart-felt delight.

The heart is made to love, and without it there can be no ſuch thing as poignant pleaſure; accordingly, a well-regulated love is one of the ſweeteſt paſſions with which it can be affected; but when that paſſion reſts only on a ſtrong ſenſation, derived from beauty, it is no more than a ſilly amour, and the heart is only ſlightly touched. Where the

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ſenſes are ſo loud and impetuous, the heart is calm and ſilent; and that love, which looks no farther than ſenſitive raptures, will ſoon come to a period.

I am not preaching up a Platonic love; that has been very juſtly ridiculed: the nature of love admits of no reſerve; but its principal ſubſtance is ſentiment; and its flame very ſeldom laſts, if fed only by the fuel of ſenſuality.

I cannot conceal it, though I am reckoned ever ſo old-faſhioned: all thoſe engagements, where duty and inclination croſs each other, are no more than a kind of libertiniſm, more or leſs refined, according to the manners and temper of the parties. No man would diſgrace the perſon he loves, and ſtill leſs would he corrupt

rupt her mind, after having corrupted her heart; yet this is the way with moſt of our pretty fellows, who, after drawing a woman into their licentiouſneſs, are for juſtifying it to her, by extirpating the ideas ſhe has of virtue and propriety, as troubleſome prejudices. Indeed the miſtreſs and the lover will be ill ſuited to each other, if both have not abſolutely ſhaken off the yoke of truth and of modeſty *.

Theſe are not ſuppoſitions proceeding either from whim or ill-nature: all places ſwarm with thoſe pretty

* There are great numbers of women, whoſe minds have been corrupted by a falſe philoſophy, ſtyling themſelves Pyrrhonians, Materialiſts, &c. for this they may thank the pure paſſion of free-thinkers, and ſome deteſtable books, as Thereſa, or The Female Philoſopher, the Letter to Leucippe, &c the ſcope of which is, by making atheiſts of them, to appeaſe their conſciences.

pretty fellows, who inſinuating themſelves into the ladies favour, by the powerful recommendation of dreſs, politeneſs, and a ſmattering of wit, endeavour to baniſh their ſcruples, and extinguiſh in them all ſenſe of virtue, and rule of conduct. Women cannot be too much on their guard againſt theſe moſt peſtilential ſeducers, as, on account of their readineſs to cloſe with the ideas of thoſe whom they like, their minds too often follow the biaſs of their hearts.

Such is love, and ſuch are the fruits of it, when its only view is ſenſuality. After all the delicious repreſentations of it, in proſe and verſe, the paſſion which prompted the mind to ſuch ecſtatic effuſions, is generally no more than vice in diſguiſe. It may, for a time, be attended

tended with lively emotions, and melting raptures; but all this subsides with the ebullitions of the senses, and the short phrensy of imagination will be superseded by the bittereſt grief.

In a word, mere love, detached from every other ſentiment, is but a tranſient fire, gradually going out at the firſt familiarity with the object which kindled it: never does it truely poſſeſs the ſoul, but when connected with a more ſolid ſentiment. Love waſtes and deſtroys itſelf, if not ſtrengthened by a tender affection, felt only by the ſenſible and virtuous heart; an affection which luxury and voluptuouſneſs have totally extinguiſhed, to make room for an artifice, which always leaves the heart void.

For

For love to be conſtant and laſting, it muſt enter into a cloſe alliance with friendſhip; and from this coalition both ſenſations derive additional force. Love becomes more ſolid, and friendſhip more tender; and thus their ſhafts, mutually ſharpened by each other, are the more pointed.

The alliance of ſuch ſoft ſenſations, inſtead of depraving, muſt improve the heart: two lovers of this kind are affectionate friends, full of reciprocal zeal and eſteem: reſerve and miſtruſt has no place with them; a perfect harmony reigns in all their thoughts, emotions, and expreſſions. Inſtead of avoiding the indiſſoluble tie, their only fear is, leſt they ſhould be ſeparated. They long to beſtow themſelves on each other,

other, and, if they could, would give away ſtill more.

Such a love is no frivolous amuſement, no paſtime taken up from idleneſs or vanity; it poſſeſſes all the faculties; the mind, the heart, the imagination, the memory, the whole perſon is agreeably warmed by it: it is the moſt weighty affair of life. For a woman of delicate ſentiments to beſtow her heart, is, properly, to give up her whole ſelf; and ſurely ſhe ſhould well conſider to whom ſhe makes ſuch a preſent.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Marriage.

"WHEREVER there is a "man, a woman, and ſub-"ſiſtence, a marriage follows," ſays the author of the Spirit of Laws. As love, by an invincible power, draws men towards the fair ſex, which exults in the effects of its charms, and as the rational end of love can be no other than a ſettled and conſtant union, one muſt naturally lead to the other.

To this delightful connection we are all called; it is a tie which we cannot, without folly, decline. What then muſt be thought of thoſe humouriſts,

humouriſts, thoſe avowed enemies of marriage, who pride themſelves in ridiculing it. What very commendable or happy uſe do they make of that liberty, which they are perpetually boaſting of? It hangs heavier on them than the very engagement of which they expreſs ſuch contempt and deteſtation; and, indeed, is ſo great a burden to them, that, ſoon or late, they are ſeen to ſacrifice it to the moſt contemptible objects.

Men who have ſpent their youth in licentiouſneſs, charge the whole ſex with the vices of ſome looſe women, whom they have kept company with, and paſs upon them all a ſentence equally injurious. Hence the ſarcaſtick ſtrokes and witticiſms on thoſe men who eſteem women

ſo far as to enter into the matrimonial tie. Theſe libertines talk of marriage as a ſtate of inſeparable treachery and infidelity; but ſuch language only beſpeaks a heart thoroughly corrupt: it is, at preſent, one of the common places for the witling's railleries; and their aſperſions on the moſt endearing of all connections, look as if they had formed a plot for proſcribing all legitimacy of birth.

If theſe men had a determined averſion againſt women, if they ſhunned all intercourſe with the ſex, one would only pity them, as deprived of a great part of the pleaſures of ſociety; but one muſt hate them, when we ſee them dangling after women whom they deſpiſe,

deſpiſe*, and carrying on an intrigue, which aims only at the diſgrace both of the fair one and themſelves; while the ruinous thraldom, to which a mere outcaſt of ſociety frequently reduces them for their whole life, is real matter of laughter. Then is the ſex amply revenged; for, ſince we muſt, one way or other, after all our invectives againſt women, live under female government, it is better to have for ſovereign a virtuous wife, than a perfidious miſtreſs.

But men are never conſiſtent with themſelves; they all ardently follow

* Theſe gentlemen are the reverſe of Lipſius; they cry up celibacy, and run after every woman they ſee. Liſerus recommended polygamy, which brought him into a great deal of trouble, yet he never had a wife; he was even incapable of having one.

the emotions of love. Now if this love, which is ſo paſſionately deſired, afford any delicate pleaſures, thoſe of conjugal friendſhip, however ſhunned by ſo many, muſt be the moſt refined, and moſt ſtable.

The love of a miſtreſs is generally a ſource of falſehoods, and inſipid nonſenſe, without one ſingle commendable view; whereas the love of a wife is the principle of many ſolid and agreeable qualities, and is always conſiſtent with honour and virtue. One is the burning heat of a fever, the other the moderate warmth of a healthy conſtitution.

Women, and to their praiſe be it ſpoken, are in this reſpect leſs inconſiſtent than us, and ſhow a greater firmneſs, though ſuch a ſtep be more dangerous to them, on account

count of the kind of dependency annexed to marriage.

Their fixed reſolution is always to give themſelves to the perſon they love, and little ſollicitation prevails on the fair ſex to contract an engagement: whether from averſion to that retirement which cuſtom enjoins to girls, or whether a tenderneſs of diſpoſition pleads for us, all the younger part of the ſex yield, with a bluſh, to the overture of being made wives; but all are not equally diſpoſed to thoſe amiable meaſures, by which alone they can, for any time, be rendered happy and beloved conſorts.

To make a marriage happy, two things concur; the choice of the married pair, and their behaviour together.

As to the choice, it does not uſually depend wholely on the diſpoſition of the parties concerned. A girl, at her very firſt entrance into to the world, would be the dupe of a beauiſh and polite appearance, and joyfully give her hand to ſome very unworthy man, were not her want of experience ſupplied by that of her parents: happily for her, they are to point out to her the object to which ſhe may, with propriety, attach herſelf; and it is not for her heart to ſpeak before they have.

This ſubjection of the heart, to the will and choice of another, will be exclaimed againſt as a very hard law. But a little reflection, on the misfortunes which would follow from an abolition of this law, demonſtrates its utility. It is the only

way to prevent ſeducement: it is a beneficial violence, the motive of which is to reſcue giddy youth from certain wretchedneſs.

Further, as equitable parents do not diſpoſe of their daughter's heart without her conſent, this conſent, agreeing with theirs, aſſures the goodneſs of the choice. Parents require ſubſtance and virtue, as, without theſe, marriage can neither be eaſy nor creditable. The young lady looks chiefly for perſonal graces and complaiſance; qualities which, indeed, tend to the agreeableneſs of an union. Theſe objects, which are perfectly conſiſtent, contribute equally to the felicity of the married pair, and the combination of them only renders a marriage the more happy.

In whatever hands this important conſideration be lodged, the choice of an inſeparable companion is to be maturely weighed, and not decided by avarice or humour. Too many women, and women of merit, are ſeen lingering under the heart-breaking ſlavery of immoral men, whoſe fortune had infatuated them, while numbers of others curſe that precipitate love which has joined them to men beneath the very weakeſt of women, and utterly incapable of preſiding at the head of their families, either to its advantage or honour.

For two lovers, paſſionately enamoured with each other, to promiſe themſelves happineſs of any continuance, if only beauty or fortune made the match, is a chimerical imagination.

gination. Theſe are advantages neither to be totally neglected, nor excluſively ſought after. There are others which are more eſſential, and more directly relative to happineſs; temper and manners ſhould be chiefly conſidered. The principal accompliſhment of a man is real merit; this diſtinguiſhes him in the world, and does honour to his wife: ſhe is ſoon diſguſted with a huſband, in whom ſhe finds only a delicacy of complexion, trifling converſation, and nothing beyond what ſhe meets with in the generality of her own ſex.

Moſt matrimonial uneaſineſſes are owing to the having been captivated by a falſe merit. A ſprightly woman leads a joyleſs life with an empty, though pretty fellow; ano-

ther complains of a husband, as volatile and trifling as herself; others are, indeed, loaded with golden chains, but as unhappy as they are rich: however, if the imprudence of their choice plunged them into this misery, no small part of their grievances may very well be attributed to the manner in which they behaved with a husband who is beginning to displease.

The first law lovers should lay down to themselves, is to forbid themselves all inquiry, or consideration, and likewise all regret, after the conclusion of the marriage. Before, one can scarce examine too closely the qualities of the person with whom we are going to be joined; but, afterwards, we cannot have too much indulgence for each other.

If faults then appear, which had not even been ſuſpected, the ſame perſon may, on the other hand, be poſſeſſed of good qualities which had been overlooked. Human nature affords nothing perfect; and if lovers, on becoming huſbands, ſometimes find themſelves miſtaken, it is becauſe they liſtened to a blind paſſion, and promiſed themſelves felicities which have no real exiſtence.

The great fault of lovers is, their looking on the perſon beloved as a divinity free from all imperfection. Pygmalion-like, they form to themſelves an imaginary object, after which they paint her; but when they perceive that ſhe wants ſome of the lineaments, with which their fancy had ſo profuſely decorated the chimerical object of their homage,

they

they become out of humour, and complain of the fair who had charmed them; yet is ſhe ſtill what ſhe was when they were firſt ſmitten with her, and very often all her crime is, the not being totally exempt from the foibles of human nature.

This expectation of a chimerical happineſs, is deceived in another point, which many women very unreaſonably murmur at; they would have love retain all the vehemence of the firſt days, and, on an abatement of its tranſports, complain of being no longer loved. For this huſbands may, indeed, thank their own indiſcretion: ſtimulated by their firſt ardour, they expreſs a fondneſs for their wives, which it is impoſſible ſhould laſt to ſuch exceſs; and a

woman,

woman, habituated to the pleaſing illuſions of too ſanguine a paſſion, would have this intoxication perpetual, and cannot endure the calm which naturally ſucceeds it.

Yet this compoſure muſt neceſſarily be the caſe; and a more happy wiſh one cannot form, than that love may be reduced to the moderate emotions of a tender friendſhip, the only baſis of a permanent happineſs, and proof againſt time, which puts a period to love: ſuch friendſhip knits, and riſes to its higheſt perfection, with a pair who eſteem and conſtantly ſtudy to pleaſe one another. This is a ſtate, beyond all compariſon, blending the pleaſures of ſenſe with thoſe of reaſon, an exquiſite aſſemblage of all the ſweets of life.

To keep up this friendſhip in its original livelineſs, and render converſation pleaſing, after a daily intercourſe for ſeveral years, the ſoul muſt have in itſelf a rich fund of various knowledge; but, on the other hand, the ſoul, in ripening, acquires, if the expreſſion may be allowed, a conſiſtency, whereby it becomes capable of fixing. The volatile minds of women, in the early bloom of life, flutter from object to object; and it is not till they have got over the vanity of their early years, that they can reliſh the delicious pleaſure of being alone with the perſon they love.

Marriage is an engagement very eaſily contracted; but to go through its functions with dignity, and diſcharge all the duties of domeſtic life,

life, requires, perhaps, as much virtue as a public ſtation. The moſt eminent perſonages have been remarkable patterns of conjugal affection: Penelope, Andromache, Portia, and Cornelia, have been models of this kind. Artemiſia never gave over lamenting her deceaſed huſband, and even mingled his aſhes with her drink. Marcus Aurelius, and Cæſar *, were very tender huſbands; and Pliny, in a letter to his wife's aunt, writes thus †: "We "return you our thanks; I, for her "being my wife; ſhe, for my being "her huſband; both, for your hav-"ing united two perſons made for "each other."

All

* Cæſar loved his firſt wife ſo much, that, contrary to the eſtabliſhed cuſtom, he would himſelf pronounce her funeral oration.

† Book IV. Letter 19.

All theſe perſons were endued with an excellent temper, and had a ſtrength of mind, more neceſſary for the preſervation of concord and good-nature than is generally thought. The communication of ideas, and mixture of intereſts, often breed diviſions, where one of the two has not a ſuperior addreſs to bring over the other. Little minds cannot bring themſelves to give up any thing; their fancies muſt be laws; they wrangle about mere trifles; and thus a thouſand diſputes ariſe, which inſenſibly imbitter their union. Accordingly we ſee few marriages, in which more conformity of tempers, and concord, is not to be deſired.

This will ſtill be leſs matter of wonder, to any who obſerve the unhappy

happy contraſt between the manners of the lover and thoſe of the huſband. Both men and women ſeem to aim only at enſnaring each other; they deck themſelves out with great care; they make it their buſineſs to prevent every minute deſire. But ſhort is the duration of theſe endearing reciprocations: no ſooner is the miſtreſs become a wife, than, inſtead of endeavouring to make herſelf more amiable, ſhe neglects herſelf, gives over the practice of thoſe talents which were an ornament to her, and the lover, when become a huſband, diſappears, and is ſeldom ſeen: they fall into an indelicate familiarity, and ſometimes both give occaſion for jealouſy; which is a fatal ſtroke to the tenderneſs of love.

This

This is the rock which, of all others, love ſhould avoid. Nothing alienates the heart more than the looſe airs of a volatile coquette; yet is this a very common fault among our ladies of high rank; and ſome are ſo habituated to tumult and diſſipation, that they look upon a regular, diſcrete huſband, as little better than an honeſt ſteward: they think him too happy in ſupplying their expenſive pleaſures, though never permitted to partake of them. In ſuch a caſe, the delicacy inſeparable from love cannot but be alarmed; yet are not theſe reaſonable uneaſineſſes to be confounded with the gloomy fits of a jealouſy which tyranniſes over virtue.

All theſe inconveniences, with many others, ſo exaggerated in converſation,

verſation, are not neceſſary conſequences of marriage, but ariſe only from the faults and follies of ſome perſons, which ought not to be extended to the generality. The number of unhappy marriages is not ſo great as ſome make it; and thoſe which are accounted ſo, are not without their ſweets. I am certain, that, were divorces allowed among us, they would be much leſs frequent than the malignity of ſome wittlings is pleaſed to ſuppoſe. They were allowed of at Rome, yet a ſpace of near 500 years affords but one inſtance of ſuch a ſeparation.

Beſides, if ſome women are of a troubleſome caſt, there are many more moroſe and unjuſt huſbands; and whoever enquires into the cauſe of domeſtic jars, will find few which have

have not their riſe from the huſband's imprudence or immorality. Moſt of them, at firſt, ſuffer themſelves to be governed like children, and, after ſome time, are for aſſuming a ſuperiority which they had loſt by their own fault. Others, with choler and violence blend an intermitting fondneſs, to which it is not every provoked woman that will make anſwerable returns. Some deny their wives the moſt indiſpenſible neceſſaries; ſeveral ſet them an example of the moſt abandoned profligacy. Are ſuch huſbands to complain, if their wives are not angels, and fail in complaiſance to the brute beaſt to which it is their misfortune to be tied?

A man of a right turn of mind is able, by inſinuating means, to bring

bring his wife to a ſenſe of any deviations into which ſhe may have ſtrayed. Some ſlight foibles he overlooks as a ſmall tribute, which ſaves her from greater imperfections. This is the ſound philoſophy for married people. Xantippe, Socrates's wife, was not the moſt gentle of women; yet her perverſeneſs did not put the philoſopher out of temper with the conjugal tie; and one day he ſpoke of it before a numerous aſſembly, in ſuch honourable terms, and placed all its advantages in ſo fair a light, that, within the year, all his auditors married *.

After

* I expect no ſuch ſucceſs; if only one of my readers be prevailed on to marry, I ſhall eſteem it an equivalent for my labour.

After all, whatever the enemies of wedlock may say, if there be any such thing as happineſs here below, it is in an equal marriage, where two perſons live in an affectionate connection, no leſs from inclination than the ſacred engagement which they have taken upon themſelves. Such a pair conform to faſhion and cuſtom, no farther than is agreeable to their eſteem for each other. The huſband, ſo far from being aſhamed to be ſeen with his wife, is never better pleaſed, has never ſuch a flow of openneſs and good-humour, as in her company; and the wife finds, in the converſation of a complaiſant, indulgent huſband, an inſtruction to which her tenderneſs adds a value: it is from him ſhe delights to receive knowledge, as adapting it to her eaſy

eaſy comprehenſion, and always ſeaſoning it with ſome obliging ſtroke. She learns well only under ſuch a maſter.

——He, ſhe knew, would intermix
Grateful digreſſions, and ſolve high diſputes
With conjugal careſſes; from his lip
Not words alone pleas'd her.

MILTON.

Every thing reminds an affectionate wife of her beloved object: her name, her livery, her rank, are continual memorials of the man to whom ſhe has given her heart: each finds in the other a lover, a friend, a counſellor, and a witneſs of its worth: pleaſures are heightened by being participated, and amidſt the ſympathy of a tender comforter, the little troubles, inſeparable from human life, ſit lightly.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Education of Children.

WHATEVER fondneſs a father may feel for his children, they meet with ſtill more lively tokens of tenderneſs in the mother's boſom. A woman's heart, when not given up to the error of paſſion, places her whole affection in a family, of which ſhe is alſo the whole delight; and nature, throughout all her branches, has no ties comparable to thoſe between a fond mother and grateful children.

This gentle empire, cemented by kind offices and gratitude, conſtitutes all the glory and happineſs of a wiſe woman.

woman. There is my dreſs and my jewels, ſaid the noble mother of the Gracchi, pointing to her children, whom ſhe was inſtructing. Such ornaments, trained up to adorn and promote the welfare of ſociety, throw a luſtre on a woman, ſuperiour to all the gems of the eaſt.

Let not a fine woman apprehend any diminution of her charms from her performing the part of a mother; they will only be multiplied in a groupe of fine children, which ſhe will look upon with pleaſure as they ſtand by her ſide. She is in a ſtate of triumph while with thoſe dear fruits of her love about her, and diſtributing her careſſes among them. It is amazing that ever, by a moſt wretched prejudice, a contrary opinion ſhould find admittance into

a human breaſt: fine ladies are aſhamed of having many children, and what they have are carefully kept at a diſtance; the pernicious ſuggeſtion of a coquettry which in every thing runs counter to nature.

One conſequence of this falſe delicacy is, that a woman, whom nature has completely qualified to ſuckle her children, makes uſe of forced means to dry up that milk which they require, and expoſes herſelf to no ſmall danger, rather than acquit her of that duty. To ſupply her place, ſhe hires a woman, who naturally has no particular concern nor tenderneſs for the little creature committed to her charge. Is it any thing very ſtrange, that the health, and even the ſhape of children, ſo frequently ſuffer, by the want of

care

care in people whoſe only tie to them is a very ſlender allowance?

But it is not only the conſtitution which is in danger with a nurſe, who gorges herſelf with coarſe and unwholeſome foods; the connection between temperature and morality ſhould be ſtill a farther cauſe of fear for the diſpoſitions and faculties. Diodorus Siculus ſays, that Nero's nurſe was very much addicted to wine; a vice which was the original cauſe of all that emperor's enormities; and, according to the ſame authour, the woman to whom the ſanguinary Caligula was committed, uſed to rub her nipples with blood. It is an immemorial obſervation, that children imbibe the temper and qualities of the nurſes in their milk; hence the fables of Romulus, Tele-

phus, Pelias, Egiſthus, being ſuckled by beaſts, from the like ſavageneſs of diſpoſition. We daily ſee children of very creditable perſons, but nurſed by low people, retain all their inclinations; and ſhould not this ſet mothers againſt expoſing their children to ſuch danger?

I ſhall not here relate all that the friends of human nature have delivered on this important ſubject: I ſhall only add, that it is with a child ſuckled by ſtrange milk, as with a plant removed into a ſtrange ſoil; a degeneracy is greatly to be feared in both. In no inſtance has nature put ſo exact an analogy, as between the mother's conſtitution and that of the child*. Both, for the ſpace of nine months,

* A convincing proof of this is, that the infant need not be at the breaſt ſo long: it thrives better

months, made but one whole; and as, during that period, the mother neceſſarily nouriſhed the infant with her own ſubſtance, it is an obligation incumbent upon her to continue giving it.

There are caſes, indeed, where of two evils the worſt is to be avoided, which would be, to nurſe; but theſe diſpenſable caſes are very rare, and the mother is then to be pitied equally with the child. Naturally a woman who has ſtrength to bring forth a child, is ſufficiently able to ſuckle it; and it is alſo much for her own advantage: her care finds its reward in a ſpeedy recovery and a vigorous health: and we ſhould ſoon

better in ſix months on the mother's milk, than in a twelvemonth with a nurſe; and ſome I have known weaned at four months.

ſoon ſee leſs megrims, vapours, and other accidents, if there were more nurſes among the ladies *.

But without preſuming to diſturb the ſex in the pleaſure of diſplaying their charms, which, however, were not given them for mere parade, ſtill would I entreat and ſollicit them to merit the appellation of mother, by cares which give a better title to it than bringing forth children, which is the conſequence only of an inſtinct very little meritorious; but bringing up one's children is an act of

* Lactation cauſes a ſalutary interval between one pregnancy and another, to the great relief of a woman's conſtitution; and as to the plea of a huſband's diſlike, few, I believe, will be againſt ſuch a reſpite.

As to the accidents which have followed from the imprudence of ſome over-nice young women, ſuch as catching cold, fretting, &c. Nature is not anſwerable for our doings, and theſe do not juſtify a deviation from her intentions.

of choice and of virtue. What can be thought of a mother, who, having been hardly delivered of a child which ſhe carried about often with regret, ſends it away into the country, fifty or a hundred miles off, where it is ſucceſſively put into the hands of hirelings, and at the loweſt rate, till theſe dear children, who ſcarce know her, are removed to the college or convent for as many years more?

Nothing can juſtify this monſtrous indifference. The moſt noble employment of a mother is the early formation of the mind and heart of her children: on this firſt culture depends the fate of theſe young plants, and the impreſſions received in that tender age never wear off. Is then ſo eſſential an ob-

ject to be left to careleſs ſervants, who are generally vulgar, and not ſeldom vicious? It muſt be a very immoderate ſelf-love, which can ſhut the eyes of a perſon againſt perceiving the conſequences of ſo indiſcrete a confidence.

To elude the claims of maternal tenderneſs, your fine women have a thouſand reaſons, as frivolous as themſelves: there is but one, which they alledge not; yet does it make much for ſending away girls; and that is the danger of ill example; for, from the kind of education given to daughters by ſuch mothers, their innocence muſt appear to be in imminent danger. What ſome people call a genteel education, which is very different from a good one, cannot but prepare a girl for a ſpeedy

going

going off. All the rules of inſtruction preſcribed to her, tend only to teach her the dangerous art of pleaſing. No ſooner is ſhe weaned, than ſhe is talked to about dreſs and beauty: ſhe is committed to a dancing-maſter, who teaches her to hold up her head with a haughty ſtiffneſs; to bridle, put out her breaſt, and to move like a puppet. Then comes the ſinging-maſter to modulate her voice, by teaching her ſilly ſongs. She hears nothing but of genteel carriage, fine features, and bodily accompliſhments, as points on which her rank in ſociety muſt entirely depend; not a ſingle word about good-nature, diſcretion, improvement of the mind and heart, ever enters her ears. And what follows? The little lady carefully re-

members all, holds up her head, ſings, wantons to perfection, and grows a mighty pretty doll; but her mind is filled with futilities.

The air and turn of the body, to be ſure, deſerve ſome attention; beauty is a capital point, but ſtands in no need of ſo many helps. The miſchief is, that all the care is beſtowed on the ſhape, voice, and carriage, while little or no regard is paid to the mind, though it has more need of cultivation than the body. When the latter only is attended to, the mind lies fallow; and in proportion as one is preferred to the other, the body expreſſes the qualities of the ſoul, or draws it into its own appetites. But a mother, who has devoted her whole life to her perſon, is very well pleaſed if her daughter

daughter be but like her; ſhe meant nothing beyond making her an agreeable woman; and thus, from mother to daughter, is perpetuated the numerous generation of coquettes.

Children generally take after their parents, fathers and mothers being models, which reſpect and habit naturally incline us to imitate: their example is a powerful leſſon; and one cannot conceive what impreſſion any difference between a married pair, tranſport, &c. make on young children, who take notice of things much more than is thought; for their minds, not being over-ſtocked with ideas, furniſh themſelves out of what they ſee. The exceſſes, of which they are witneſſes, leave deep impreſſions on them, and theſe are afterwards

afterwards renewed on ſimilar occaſions. In general, both ſexes would be better, if thoſe to whom they owe their exiſtence loved one another better, and were a little wiſer.

But, to confine myſelf more particularly to what regards the fair ſex; domeſtick examples have the greater force on a daughter, as ſhe is ſeldom out of her mother's ſight. It is not an intercourſe with the world that can ſpoil her; if ſhe contracts any of its infinite whims or vices, it muſt be from what ſhe ſees in her own giddy mother. The bare approbation of modiſh vices carries contagion with it, children naturally admiring what they ſee their parents like. Fauſtina's fondneſs for gladiatorial ſhows rendered her ſon, the

the emperor Commodus, one of that ignoble profeſſion.

A woman of ſenſe and virtue, far from encouraging her daughters in the ſeveral reigning follies, is able, without having recourſe either to auſterity or violence, to keep them at a due diſtance from whatever claſhes with diſcretion and reaſon: in ſhowing them the world, ſhe makes it a leſſon to them, pointing out its follies and vices for them to avoid, and in all her behaviour lays down the beſt rule for them to follow: ſuch a mother looks not on her daughters as dangerous rivals, by whoſe dawning graces her own beauty is obſcured; they are her moſt pleaſing company; ſhe hangs over them with virtuous raptures, and rejoices in their

their accompliſhments and charms, as the fruits of her prudent care.

In the auguſt family of the prince whom we obey no leſs from affection than duty, we behold with pleaſure the pleaſing picture of this delightful harmony: a mother, tenderly beloved, ſees her virtues ſhooting up around the throne: a wiſe princeſs, equally dear to the ſtate and to her huſband, divides her fond cares amidſt young princes, the promiſing hopes of a great monarchy: love, tenderneſs, every ſoft and endearing emotion, reign in that adored court. Happy the ſubjects of ſuch maſters! royalty being only paternal government, a little more widely extended.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Womens Virtues.

IF women placed a proper value on themſelves, they would diſdain a perpetual attachment to that narrow round of trivial amuſements, which keeps them always children. With ſuch low ideas of one's ſelf, there is no riſing above the claſs in which we have placed ourſelves. To act with dignity, requires a perſon to think a little highly of one's ſelf, and to enlarge rather than contract the ſphere of one's thoughts.

When a woman once determines to ſoar above every debaſing object, her mind ſeconds the noble purpoſe with

with a force equal to that of men. Underſtanding has no ſex; and this is a truth of which women cannot be too often reminded, as a powerful motive to detach them from all thoſe trifles which they ſeem to make their ſupreme good.

Let women, therefore, be ſenſible of their privileges, and exert them to their own and our happineſs. They have ſet us patterns of the moſt exalted virtues; very powerful patterns, which our innate propenſity for the ſex prompts us to imitate. Women may always make us what they pleaſe; it is in their power to alter the appearance of ſociety for better or worſe, and to give men whatever form they will.

Of female virtues, the moſt indiſpenſable, and of greateſt weight with

with us, is modeſty. This lovely virtue has ſuch an influence on the features, air, mind, and temper, that where it is wanting every thing diſguſts. It is in women what ſenſe and courage are to men, the very centre of their point of honour.

Perſons of an ignoble way of thinking may make light of both theſe points of honour, as prejudices of education; but thoſe of better principles, and purer morals, eſteem them, not as indifferent inſtitutions, but as rules founded in nature, and the very conſtitution of mankind; for, as the good of ſociety requires that men ſhould be endued with courage and vigour for its defence againſt foreign attempts, ſo no leſs eſſential are female reſervedneſs and

modeſty

modeſty to its internal quiet and intereſts.

Our forefathers, who were not behind us in plain, ſound ſenſe, made the ſum and ſubſtance of all virtues to conſiſt in theſe two points; in men courage, in women chaſtity. Theſe are the ſubjects of all the old romances: the knights overcome frightful giants, and their ladies withſtand the ſevereſt tryals *. If writings be the repreſentation of manners, the romances of theſe times will certainly tranſmit to poſterity no very high character of our purity or heroiſm.

To

* There have been women poſſeſſed of both theſe qualities. Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, beſides her excellence above the heroines of romances, was equal in courage to the boldeſt knights, heading her armies, and defeating the Romans. Here hiſtory ſurpaſſes fable.

To expatiate on the point of honour among men, would be digreſſing from my ſubject; but as to that of women, experience juſtifies the placing it in chaſtity. On the failure of this virtue, all the others, its inſeparable companions, take their flight; it is the criterion by which women can be ſaid to be better or worſe than men. When they have once forfeited that modeſty which is the leading virtue of the ſex, there is no enormity they do not become capable of. A looſe woman will not ſtick at throwing a whole ſtate into convulſions, any more than a private family. It was women of this ſtamp that fomented the fires of the League; and France ſtill remembers, with pain, the ſcandalous intrigues

trigues and crimes of an Iſabella of Bavaria.

Happily we do not ſee many women abſolutely diveſt themſelves of that modeſty which ſeems congenial to them; and it is but by repeated lapſes that a few come to ſtifle that valuable inſtinct *. Such are unworthy of being reckoned among women: they have renounced all the virtues of the ſex, and in impudence come up to the moſt profligate of ours.

Omitting this corrupt part of ſociety, which, at moſt, are entitled only to our pity, it is manifeſt, and may be ſaid without any great flattery, that women have generally better

* Modeſty, ſays Madame S. ſhould be retained, even in the moments appointed for loſing it.

univerſal motive*: it is born with them, and with them lives and dies: it produces, in all ages, thoſe amiable virtues which make us ſo fond of them; and to it are alſo owing thoſe particular vices with which we upbraid them. The more ſenſible a heart is, the deeper root, on any offence, will jealouſy, reſentment, and revenge, ſtrike in it: the wounds of the heart are not eaſily cloſed, and a woman of a tender diſpoſition carries the ſenſe of ſuch an injury to her grave.

But whatever mixture of good and evil is allowed to be in women, ſtill it muſt be granted, that, in general,

* Quinaut was well acquainted with the ſex. He excelled in drawing them, and in expreſſing their ſenſibility. Indeed he ſeems to write more from feeling than thinking, and, for this reaſon, may be called the womens poet.

neral, they are truer in their affections, have a greater regard to honour, more fidelity, conſtancy, and lead a more regular life, than the bulk of men. How many diſtinguiſh themſelves greatly in the management of their houſehold, the education of their children, and affection for their huſbands! But theſe worthy women are not the moſt fond of being ſeen: virtue ſeeks concealment as much as vice delights to ſhow itſelf.

What ſometimes leads us to judge amiſs of the ſex, is its very modeſty, as keeping its virtue in the ſhade of privacy; yet is this modeſty and ſilence its ſupreme virtue. A woman's glory is to be little ſpoken of; very different from men, who act, unmaſked, on the world's wide theatre,

atre, all the parts which their paſſions prompt to them; whereas women are to perform their parts only, as it were, behind the ſcenes; not making their appearance on the ſtage, unleſs when called forth by particular circumſtances; and then they have ſhone, and acted in the higheſt characters, with a power and dignity not inferiour to the moſt celebrated heroes.

And, indeed, in what branch of merit has not female excellence diſplayed itſelf? Polite literature has immortalized the names of many women among its moſt ſplendid ornaments *. Mademoiſelle Scudery gained

* The names of Gournay, Deſroches, Barbier, La Marchand, Saintonge, Dannoy, La Suſe, La Sabliere, Lambert, Villedieu, Dacier, Deſhoulieres, Sevigné, &c. may very well be ranked with the moſt illuſtrious of our ſex; and this makes greatly for women, their education being as much neglected as ours is cultivated.

gained the firſt academical crown *; and ſo early as the ninth century we ſee a Dodane, ducheſs of Septimania, ſhine. Women are not degenerated; we have ſtill many ſufficiently known by their performances, without my naming them, and who, in competition with us, reap the fertile field of hiſtory and philoſophy. The city of Bologna, even at this preſent time, glories in having her mathematical chair filled by the famous Agnezy, whilſt another lady † fills that of eloquence with ſuch abilities, that her lectures have always a crowded audience of men.

But to ſpeak of objects, which, though not greater in themſelves, are

* The firſt poetical prize of the Rouen academy was likewiſe voted to a lady of that city.

† We ſuppoſe the authour means here, Madam Laura Baſſi, late one of the profeſſors of anatomy at Bologna. See Condamine, *Tour to Italy*, p. 206.

are of a more glaring appearance to common eyes, how have not women acquitted themſelves in the moſt exalted ſtations? Our age has ſeen the counteſs de Goeſbriand diſcharge an embaſſy extraordinary with all the grandeur ſuch a character requires. There are women equal to any affairs: Pulcheria, Sophia, Athenais, Amalaſonte, Irene, Margaret Waldemar*, Blanche of Caſtille†, with many other princeſſes, were perfectly ſkilled in the art of government; and Catharine de Foix, conſort of John d'Albret, king of Navarre, was thoroughly ſenſible of her ſuperiority, when ſhe ſaid to her

* Queen of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, called The Northern Semiramis.

† Mother to St. Louis, and regent during the minority and abſence of her ſon.

huſband, who had been driven out of his dominions by Ferdinand, "Don John, had you been Catha-"rine, and I John, Navarre would "ſtill have been ours."

A ſlender acquaintance with hiſtory furniſhes proofs of the capacity and firmneſs of the ſex. If the reſolution of Scævola deſerved applauſe, Rome, about the ſame time, ſaw a Clelia boldly ſwim her horſe over the Tiber, amidſt a ſhower of arrows. In that calamitous juncture, when the tyranny of the Triumviri bore down all before it, Hortenſius's daughter, fearleſs of their cruelty, alone dared to employ her nervous eloquence in defence of the Roman ladies; and, in the heat of the proſcriptions, Aria encouraged her huſband to die reſolutely, and even put into

into his hands a poniard reeking with her own blood, coolly aſſuring him, that it did not hurt.

Even military ardour has flamed in ſome women, though thoſe ſanguinary virtues ſeem out of their ſphere. Beſides the famous Joan of Ark, the Judith of the fifth century, our annals have tranſmitted to us one Joan Hachette, who, heading the women in a ſally, raiſed the ſiege of Beauvais, then reduced to extremity by the duke of Burgundy*. At the ſame time England ſaw Margaret of Anjou, conſort to Henry VI. gain a battle in perſon, ſet her impriſoned huſband

* This achievement is annually commemorated at Beauvais, by a proceſſion, in which the women take precedence of the men.

at liberty, and reſtore him to the throne.

Brittany ſtill remembers the heroick counteſs of Montfort, who, amidſt the tumult of an engagement, carried her little ſon through the ranks, animating the ſoldiery to defend a ſtate of which ſhe ſo well deſerved to be the ſovereign: and under Louis XIII. in more voluptuous times, the ducheſs de Rohan defended Rochelle a whole year, againſt all the king's forces, and the addreſs of his miniſters: nothing was wanting to the glory of this action, but a better cauſe than that which the ducheſs ſupported *.

The

* Abbé Arnaud, in his Memoirs, ſpeaks of a counteſs of St. Balmont, who uſed to take the field with her huſband, and fight by his ſide. She ſent ſeveral Spaniſh priſoners of her taking to marſhal

The hiſtory of all nations affords like inſtances; they unanimouſly bear teſtimony, that women have often diſplayed an intrepidity which, in appearance, ſhould be our peculiar endowment. Boadicea, a queen of the Britons, after the loſs of fourſcore thouſand men, in an action againſt the Romans, ruſhed among the thickeſt of their forces, and fell ſword in hand. The Cimbrian army having been defeated by the Romans, the women got together, and made a vigorous ſtand; and, fighting in their chariots, greatly galled the enemy with ſtones, till, ſeeing themſelves ſurrounded, they killed both themſelves and their children.

marſhal Feuquieres; and what is not a little extraordinary, this Amazon, at home, was all affability and ſweetneſs, and gave herſelf up to reading, and acts of piety.

Theſe actions, however, are cruel, and may be compared to the ſavage fortitude of thoſe Indian women, who burn themſelves along with the bodies of their huſbands; but ſtill they denote a courage, and ſhew that women are not ſo fond of life as is generally ſuppoſed. Many of them have even laid it down rather than ſully their honour. Valerius Maximus relates, that Harmonia being the only ſurvivor of the royal family at Syracuſe, and purſued by the enemies of her houſe, could not bear that a young woman, who, attired in all the pomp of majeſty, had been ſubſtituted in her place, ſhould be delivered up to the tyrant; ſhe came herſelf to ſave her, and declared to the tyrant, that ſhe was his real enemy. A French lady, Rénée de

de Clermont d'Amboiſe, valued glory above her life, expiring at the news of Cambray, which belonged to her family, being taken; and the thirteenth century produced Blanche, wife to John Baptiſt de la Porte, a woman more to be admired than the celebrated Lucretia: being taken in the little town of Baſſano, which ſhe continued to defend after loſing her huſband; and Acciolin making an attempt on her perſon, ſhe threw herſelf out of a window, but was brought back to the barbarian; of whom ſhe obtained leave to go and pay her final duties to her huſband: when within the vault, ſhe exerted her ſtrength to ſuch a degree, that ſhe cauſed the ſtone which covered it to fall upon her, and thus buried herſelf with the precious remains of

a huſband, her fidelity to whom was ſignalized in the very laſt action of her life.

But theſe touches are too harſh; women are to be conſidered under a milder aſpect. There are innumerable paſſages, expreſſive of qualities more ſuitable to the part aſſigned them in the general tenour of life; and theſe paſſages are not the leaſt honourable. The principal virtues are thoſe which depend not on the turns and ſports of fortune, and are of daily uſe.

While all Europe rang with the name of Louis XIV. Maria Thereſa, of Auſtria, was ſcarce mentioned; yet what force muſt not that princeſs have been endued with, to oppoſe to her troubles a behaviour which made Louis XIV. on loſing her, ſay,

" This

"This is the firſt uneaſineſs ſhe "ever gave me?"

The illuſtrious marchioneſs de Maintenon, whoſe wit and amiable temper were the conſolation of that monarch's latter years, had likewiſe troubles proportioned to the elevation to which ſhe roſe. In all her various ſituations ſhe maintained a temper and equanimity, which ſhow themſelves in her letters: theſe every where ſhow a woman ſuperiour even to her own fortune.

The ſame heroiſm is met with in private life. Madame de Villacerf, when brought to her grave, in the flower of her age, by the errour of her ſurgeon, comforts him herſelf thus: "I do not look on you," ſaid ſhe in her laſt moments, "as "a perſon whoſe miſtake coſts me "my

" my life, but as a benefactor, for-
" warding my entrance into a bliſs-
" ful immortality. But, as the
" world may think otherwiſe, I
" have, in my will, enabled you to
" do without your profeſſion." A greatneſs of ſoul like this, is not acquired in an inſtant; it muſt have been the fruit of a long perſeverance in goodneſs: the detail of ſuch a woman's life would furniſh better leſſons than the hiſtories of battles and maſſacres.

On an impartial examination of the great notions which redound to the real honour of both ſexes, it may be queſtioned, on which ſide the balance would lie. I ſhall add only one paſſage, which ſets forth the goodneſs of heart, not of one particular woman, but of the whole ſex in

in general; and I am inclined to doubt, whether, in the like circumſtances, men would have given ſuch a proof of generous affection.

The emperor Conrad III. having pent up Henry the Proud, duke of Bavaria, in the town of Veinſberg, and preparing to carry it by ſtorm, the women petitioned the emperour to allow them to withdraw from the place, carrying with them what they could. This being granted, the women, to the emperor's aſtoniſhment, came out of the place with their huſbands on their backs; and Conrad, moved at the ſight, immediately pardoned both the town and the duke.

Let thoſe men then, who have it in their power to inform themſelves of hiſtorical facts, which teſtify in behalf

behalf of women, forbear their injurious declamations. Is it fair to contraſt the enormities of a few monſters, thinly ſcattered among the ſex, with the very fineſt actions of the heroes of ours? If ſome Brunehauts* are brought up againſt them, the charge may be recriminated in more than one Catiline; and if ſome men of patriotic ſpirits have offered up the deareſt ſacrifices, women have ſhown themſelves capable of the like efforts. Madame d'Angoulême, regent of the kingdom, during the detention of Francis I. ſacrificed parental tenderneſs to the welfare of the ſtate, giving up her grandchildren as hoſtages, rather

* The name of an ancient queen of France, infamous for her luſt and cruelty.

ther than the generals whom Charles V. demanded. Europe has ſeen a queen voluntarily quit a throne, for the ſake of dedicating herſelf wholely to the ſciences; and but lately a woman of illuſtrious deſcent, young and beautiful, at her own diſpoſal, and miſtreſs of an immenſe fortune, was ſeen (and who beheld ſuch a ſacrifice unmoved?) to exchange all thoſe advantages and enjoyments, for the auſterities of a convent *. Heroes do not out-number heroines, and great ſouls are not more common in one ſex than in the other.

Beſides, ſuch ſacrifices, and extraordinary efforts, are not always the genuine

* This lady being told, that it was reported ſhe heartily repented of having quitted the world, anſwered with a noble ſimplicity, "Why, am I "ſtill talked of?

genuine marks of a ſettled greatneſs of ſoul; there may be leſs difficulty in ſoaring once in life beyond the common pitch, than to preſerve the ſoul in an equal poiſe, ſteadily adhering to one well-choſen plan, and perſevering in an uniformity of conduct. Private life affords a kind of heroiſm, unobſerved by moſt men, yet, in reality, more deſerving of our encomiums than military exploits; and this is found in many women, whoſe virtue, diſdaining oſtentation, ſhows itſelf only within doors: kindneſs to ſervants, tenderneſs to relations, affability to all, continual attention to pleaſe a huſband, who ſometimes owes part of his honour and advancement to the wiſe counſels of a wife, while ſhe herſelf is ſcarce known. A celebrated general of

our

our nation, and poſſeſſed of the moſt ſhining qualities, was loſing all the advantages of them, had not the winning inſinuations of a fond and ſenſible wife drawn him from an intolerable haughtineſs and inflexibility in command. Pericles is not the only great man who ſtands indebted to an Aſpaſia for part of his merit.

It is inconceivable how many virtues there are, quite unknown, in the ſex. We are perpetually talking of noiſy folly, and fluttering vanity, but take no notice of a thouſand placid virtues, which yet are the very ſoul of domeſtic happineſs. It is in well-regulated families, rather than at balls and aſſemblies, that women are found who tacitly vindicate

vindicate their ſex *: they are to be ſought for in our churches, and thoſe houſes where indigence and diſtreſs ſeem to ſhun the looks of thoſe who are able to relieve them. There it is that female piety and benevolence diſtinguiſh themſelves: if there be ſome who, confining themſelves to a punctilious devotion, only (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) pay their compliments to virtue, a very great number of them are illumined by a real religion, ardent in the conſtant practice of ſolid piety, and free from the exceſſes of a ſuperſtitious zeal.

Virtue

* It was my happineſs to have a mother of this caſt. Her gentleneſs and chearfulneſs aroſe from a ſolid piety. The reader will permit my conſecrating this ſhort note to her memory, which I revere.

Virtue and wiſdom are joined with the graces much oftener than the ſlanderers of the ſex are willing to think *. Men are ſo enamoured with beauty, that they would make it the whole of the womens merit, never talking to them of any thing elſe. A fine woman is really, as they ſay, nature's maſter-piece; but this maſter-piece is not complete where any thing is wanting to the ſoul. This is the proper object that calls for womens ambition; when beauty is combined with ſolid merit, it may be ſaid to do honour to

* The great fault of Boileau's ſatyr is, its falling on the whole ſex in general. His cauſtic muſe, involving all women in the ſame ridicule, fails of its ſcope, which ſhould be to amend. To charge the whole ſpecies in this manner, is furniſhing vice with a palliative; but happily a virtuous woman, of whom he has forgot to give us a picture, is to be found in more than one place.

to human nature. Virtue heightens beauty, and beauty * adds a freſh luſtre to virtue, which, in the perſon of an amiable and diſcreet woman, becomes in ſome meaſure perſonified, and all its charms ſhine forth in their full glory.

* That beauty, ſo correſpondent with virtue, and which, with a juſt proportion of features, has an air of mildneſs and modeſty, is, indeed, growing ſcarce; all the faſhion now being, little bold eyes, a turned-up noſe, a diſordered air, a made look, a ſlender ſhape, and even leanneſs; and the preſent way of living, to the diſgrace of the ſpecies, has furniſhed us with many women of this make. [The authour ſpeaks here of the French ladies. Every body knows that the ladies of our own country, not excepting thoſe that were unmarried, very lately affected large waiſts, even to an appearance of pregnancy.]

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Concluſion.

AS it is not in the leaſt to be expected, that our female fops will honour this work with the ſame attention they beſtow on Angola *, I have nothing to ſay to them: as to virtuous women, of whoſe approbation I am very deſirous, I entreat their pardon for expoſing ſome faults which tarniſh the luſtre of their ſex. I know not whether it be in honour to the ſex, that truth, to which every one has a right, is always concealed from them;

* A luſcious French novel.

them; but a particular language ſeems to have been invented for diſcourſing with them. It is forgot that a handſome woman may be a perſon of very good ſenſe; nothing ſerious is entered upon with her; the anſwers to her queſtions are trivial, and ſhe is treated, in all reſpects, as a ſimpleton, or an ideot.

I have too high an idea of the ſex, to deal with them in ſo offenſive a manner: far from imagining that diverſion is all they want, I was perſuaded that ſome ſolid truths might be laid before them, and that they were able to make improvements on them beyond what I could.

This was my reaſon for not enlarging farther on the ſeveral ſubjects here mentioned, leaving to the penetration of the ſex, to tell themſelves

ſelves what I have not ſaid: I have ſufficiently performed my part, if I have convinced our belles, that the whole of their duty can never be to make a ſhow of their pretty ſelves at a great expence, and for all their trouble receiving frivolous compliments. Being, like us, endued with a mind and heart, it is incumbent on them to enlighten the one, and rectify the other.

The mind requires, for its improvement, only a moderate and pleaſant ſtudy, ſuch as may be reckoned among our diverſions. Women, from their innate facility, are inexcuſable in declining to add this new charm to thoſe they are already poſſeſſed of.

As to the heart, though it does not always conſult the mind, and

even not ſeldom gives law to it; yet a ſtock of uſeful reflexions is a happy diſpoſition towards a right government of it. If to this a woman can add a kind of habitual labour, to check the wild rovings of imagination, ſhe thereby ſecures herſelf from the tumult of paſſions, which generally make their inroads on leiſure and indolence.

A ſtated employment brings with it many benefits; it renders diverſions both more innocent and lively. Pleaſures crowd on thoſe who qualify themſelves for the enjoyment of them; and ſurely it is not by vanity that they are to be obtained. All that luxury, ſo idolized by the ladies, is but a falſe ſhow of happineſs: if depraved minds are pleaſed with

with ſeeming to be happy, men of ſenſe ſtudy to be really ſo.

This is ſoon attained, and with leſs expenſe, when we are got above the faſhionable extravagancies. A woman of good ſenſe, who is for being taken notice of only in things of real merit, is independent of all thoſe trifles, about which perſons of a weak caſt are ſo ridiculouſly elevated or dejected: exempt from thoſe viciſſitudes of good and ill humour, which break in on friendſhip, ſhe preſerves a ſerene and conſtant chearfulneſs, which is a better foil to her beauty, than all the art or glitter of dreſs.

No meaſures, indeed, can ſecure a heart againſt the approaches of love. But there is an honourable paſſion, very different from a ruinous gal-

lantry; a chaſte love, by which the ſoul will be rather improved than vitiated: this love is a kind of novitiate, antecedent to marriage. As by this the lot of all their life is decided, the ſex cannot be too circumſpect in diſtinguiſhing among their votaries the worthy man, who is qualified to make a woman happy, from the coxcomb, who can only expoſe her.

A woman, when once ſhe has taken on her this ſoft yoke, is to ſtudy every way of pleaſing her huſband, who ſhould find in her a love full as affectionate and tender as his: ſhe is to ſecond his concern, and care of a family, the education of which affords many ſenſible pleaſures to a well-diſpoſed mind, and is troubleſome only to the giddy

and

and trifling. Such a woman enjoys herſelf, and is beloved by all about her; ſhe has nothing to fear from the envenomed ſhafts of ſlander: a fair reputation is virtue's ſhadow, and always follows it inſeparably.

Theſe are the ſteps which lead to happineſs. Life, far from being a farce, or ſucceſſion of futile ſhows, is to be diverſified by employments and diverſions, ſuitable to the various ages: it is only by the good uſe of it that the peaceful frame of ſoul, called happineſs, can be acquired, which ſome women vainly ſeek in the ſplendour of equipages, the radiancy of jewels, and thoſe tumultuous, or criminal pleaſures, which rather throw them at a greater diſtance from it. All theſe things no more fill up the place of happineſs,

than all the deceits of the toilette ſupply the want of beauty.

There is an amiable philoſophy, free from the frowns of auſterity, reconciling duties and amuſements; and this ſuits the ſex much better than the ſupercilious pedantry of our free-thinkers. Its ſalutary doctrine teaches to take things as they are, inſtead of expecting them to be as they appear, through the erroneous medium of wanton fancy; its diſciples know nothing of thoſe inward murmurs which imperceptibly injure the organs, and are the more dangerous to women, on account of the greater delicacy of their nerves. That ſoberneſs of heart is intimately connected with happineſs, and the very eſſence of wiſdom: were women brought to it, men would ſoon

follow; the conformity between the two ſexes being ſuch, that if one gives itſelf up either to reaſon or folly, the other is not long in ſtriking into the ſame path. Nothing is wanting to the glory of the fair ſex, as they have from all times been poſſeſſed of the power of enlivening and embelliſhing it, but to have the further honour of reforming it. This is earneſtly recommended to them, and ours will think it no diſgrace to owe to it their return to reaſon.

THE END.

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